

USA DEAF BASEBALL

MEDIA GUIDE



2026



Hello Friends,

Baseball and community are at the heart of who we are. Baseball is far more than a game. It is a source of joy, culture, history, and connection. For the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, it is also a powerful space for identity, pride, and belonging.

Our organization exists to serve and strengthen the Deaf baseball community at every level. While fielding a national team for the World Deaf Baseball Championship in Kanagawa, Japan in November 2026 is an important milestone, our mission reaches far beyond international competition. We are committed to building sustainable pathways for Deaf and Hard of Hearing athletes through youth baseball clinics, overnight summer camps, leadership development, and year-round opportunities to grow both on and off the field.

Across the country, thousands of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children play on predominantly hearing little league teams. Too often, they do so without access to Deaf role models, language access, or a broader sense of community. We want them to know they are not alone. We are here to support them, empower them, and connect them to a rich legacy of Deaf athletes who have paved the way.

This official media guide represents more than a team; it represents a movement. With your support, we can elevate visibility, create access, and foster confidence, pride, and belonging for Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth nationwide.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for helping us build a stronger future for Deaf baseball.

Sincerely,
Danny Gabel
USA Deaf Baseball
Executive Director
& Head Coach

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Frederick, MD 21701

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Since 1996, **USA Deaf Baseball** has been the national governing body for the sport of baseball.

It represents athletes who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing across the United States of America.

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**Follow us
on social media**



@usadeafbaseball

Official Program updated as of: August 18, 2026

Our Mission

USA Deaf Baseball exists to:

- ★ Provide accessible, competitive baseball opportunities for athletes who are Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- ★ Empower athletes to communicate fully in their own language
- ★ Create environments where athletes compete proudly
- ★ Ensure Deaf athletes belong completely – on and off the field

Who We Are

A national Deaf-led program that:

- ★ Competes internationally at major Deaf events
- ★ Hosts youth & development clinics
- ★ Develops coaches who understand Deaf athletes
- ★ Creates new opportunities for Deaf athletes
- ★ Builds a thriving community of athletes, volunteers, & families

Why It Matters

Deaf Athletes Face Barriers

- ★ Limited access to qualified coaching
- ★ Communication gaps in hearing programs
- ★ Few role models who use ASL
- ★ Isolation in team environments

We Change the Narrative

- ★ Coach fully in ASL
- ★ Build teams & communities
- ★ Safe, culturally aligned spaces
- ★ Develop athletes & leaders

***“Playing Deaf baseball and wearing ‘USA’ is an honor.
It means we get to represent something bigger than ourselves.”***

Marcus Smith
2026 Team USA Deaf Athlete

Our Vision

1-Year Plan (2026 Season)

- ★ Compete at **2026 World Deaf Baseball Championship** in Kanagawa, Japan
- ★ Host multiple youth clinics nationwide
- ★ Build a national player pipeline
- ★ Train Deaf development coaches
- ★ Launch a national Deaf youth camp

5-Year Plan (2027-2031 Season)

- ★ Establish annual national Deaf youth camp
- ★ Establish a competitive 14U Team USA
- ★ Deaf school league partnerships
- ★ U.S. Deaf Baseball Tournaments
- ★ Representation in the next Deaflympics



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Stretch Goal: Host a World Deaf Baseball Championship in 2030

Every practice, tournament, and camp brings us one step closer to Japan. Your support helps cover travel, lodging, equipment, and accessibility for every athlete, coach, and staff.



Help Send Team USA Deaf to Japan – Donate Today!



LEADERSHIP & STAFF



Danny Gabel

Executive Director & Head Coach

Born in Staten Island, New York, and now living in Frederick, Maryland, Danny holds both a B.A. in Deaf Studies and an M.A. in Public Administration from Gallaudet University. A general contractor by trade, Danny has also served as President of the Staten Island Club for the Deaf and the Eastern Athletic Association of the Deaf championing Deaf sports leadership nationwide.

Board



DARREN DROLSBAUGH
YOUTH PROGRAMS COORDINATOR



JAKE GRINDSTAFF
FINANCE COORDINATOR



DYLAN HEUER
VISUAL MEDIA COORDINATOR



CLINT SQUIRES
MEMBER AT-LARGE



Baseball Operations



KENNY LONG
ASSISTANT COACH



TYSON GILLIES
ASSISTANT COACH



RICHARD KNOPF
STATISTICIAN



SKIP FLANAGAN
PERFORMANCE COACH



2026 USA DEAF TEAM



AUSTIN ALTMAN
B/T: R/R • AGE: 29
RESIDES: Omaha, NE



CURT ANDERSON
B/T: R/R • AGE: 45
RESIDES: Aurora, SD



STEFAN ANDERSON
B/T: R/R • AGE: 27
RESIDES: Stillwater, MN



ELIJAH ARENIBAS
B/T: R/R • AGE: 22
RESIDES: Las Cruces, NM



MITCHELL BENSMAN
B/T: R/R • AGE: 34
RESIDES: Columbus, OH



TRAVIS CARRIZALES
B/T: L/L • AGE: 24
RESIDES: Houston, TX



DARICO CASTILLO
B/T: R/R • AGE: 22
RESIDES: Passaic, NJ



WILLIAM CHAPMAN
B/T: R/R • AGE: 37
RESIDES: Los Angeles, CA



TRISTIN CRUSENBERRY
B/T: R/R • AGE: 23
RESIDES: Owensboro, KY



BEN DANIEL
B/T: L/L • AGE: 35
RESIDES: Herriman, UT



DARREN DROLSBAUGH
B/T: R/R • AGE: 27
RESIDES: Buda, TX



ROBERTO GARCIA
B/T: L/R • AGE: 40
RESIDES: Rochester, NY



MADDOX GARVEY
B/T: R/R • AGE: 23
RESIDES: Syracuse, NY



BO GERBRACT
B/T: R/R • AGE: 22
RESIDES: Wellsburg, IA



JAKE GRINDSTAFF
B/T: R/R • AGE: 30
RESIDES: Frederick, MD



KYLE GUMM
B/T: R/R • AGE: 30
RESIDES: Rowlett, TX



ERIC LONG
B/T: R/R • AGE: 26
RESIDES: Waldorf, MD



NATHAN RUDIK
B/T: R/R • AGE: 20
RESIDES: Indianapolis, IN



CHRIS SANTORO
B/T: R/R • AGE: 35
RESIDES: Rochester, NY



AUSTIN SLIVA-WYNNE
B/T: R/R • AGE: 28
RESIDES: Austin, TX



MARCUS SMITH
B/T: R/R • AGE: 34
RESIDES: White Plains, MD



CURTIS SQUIRES
B/T: L/L • AGE: 56
RESIDES: Mitchellville, MD



ETHAN TINGEY
B/T: R/R • AGE: 23
RESIDES: Brigham City, UT



CAMERON UPTON
B/T: R/R • AGE: 32
RESIDES: Vicksburg, MS



CARL UPTON
B/T: R/R • AGE: 42
RESIDES: Benton, AR



HEAD COACH • 46
DANNY GABEL
B/T: L/L • AGE: 46
RESIDES: Frederick, MD



ASSISTANT COACH • 2
KENNY LONG
B/T: R/R • AGE: 31
RESIDES: Washington, DC



ASSISTANT COACH • 19
TYSON GILLIES
B/T: L/R • AGE: 38
RESIDES: Vancouver, CAN



STATISTICIAN • 56
RICHARD KNOPF
B/T: R/R • AGE: 47
RESIDES: Austin, TX



MEDIA • 15
DYLAN HEUER
B/T: R/R • AGE: 37
RESIDES: Des Moines, IA



ROAD TO JAPAN

2026 Outlook

Every stop on the road to the **2026 World Deaf Baseball Championship** strengthens our team – on the field, in the community, and as ambassadors for Deaf athletes across America.

March 2026

Las Vegas, NV

MSBL/MABL Kickoff

- ★ Early spring tournament
- ★ Team USA evaluates talent, tests lineups, and builds team chemistry



June 2026

Des Moines, IA

Iowa Baseball Camp for the Deaf

- ★ Team USA joins IBCD as guest coaches
- ★ Attends Deaf Culture Night with the Iowa Cubs with recognition on the field
- ★ Plays friendly exhibition games vs local men's league teams



September 2026

Rochester, NY

Flour City Classic Labor Day Tournament

- ★ Hosts USA Youth Baseball Clinic
- ★ Practices in large Deaf community
- ★ Competes in a tournament before Japan
- ★ Attends Rochester Red Wings game



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2026 World Deaf Baseball Championship

November 1-3, 2026

Kanagawa, Japan

2026 World Deaf Baseball Championship

The world's premier Deaf baseball event returns in Japan. Held every two years, the WDBC brings together the top Deaf baseball nations for elite competition, cultural exchange, and global visibility.

2026 marks only the second WDBC, with the next tournament expected to take place in South Korea in 2028.

Team USA will arrive in Japan battle-tested – every exhibition and tournament adding real experience, momentum, and confidence on the world stage.

Nations expected:

USA, Japan, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Mexico, along with growing interest from additional countries.

Our goal:

Represent the Deaf community on the international stage and bring home gold.



"Every stop across America brings us one step closer to Japan – to compete, and to show the world what Deaf athletes can do."

Danny Gabel
Executive Director & Head Coach



HISTORY



2024 WDBC

Team USA Earns Silver on the Global Stage

International Deaf baseball made its long-awaited return in 2024 with the inaugural **World Deaf Baseball Championship** in Taipei City, Taiwan, marking a new era for global Deaf athletics.

Team USA battled through a competitive field to earn the silver medal, finishing behind Japan in the championship game.

Highlights

- ★ **Coaches:** Kenny Long, Danny Gabel, Siah Huseby
- ★ **Captains:** Jake Grindstaff, Darren Drolsbaugh, Chester Kuschmider
- ★ **Final Record:** 3-3 overall
(2-2 in round-robin play, 1-1 in playoffs)
- ★ **Key Wins:** Defeated Korea, Mexico, Taiwan
- ★ **Championship Result:** Lost to Japan, 13-5

Tournament All-Stars

- Four Americans were recognized for their outstanding performances:
- ★ Tournament Team MVP: Stefan Anderson
 - ★ OF Kyle Gumm
 - ★ 3B Mitchell Bensman
 - ★ 1B Darren Drolsbaugh



Medals

1 JAPAN

2 USA

3 TAIWAN

4) Korea 5) Mexico

Results

Game	Result
USA vs Korea	W, 17-7
USA vs Taiwan	L, 5-6
USA vs Japan	L, 6-11
USA vs Mexico	W, 13-1
USA vs Taiwan SEMIFINAL	W, 14-2
USA vs Japan FINAL	L, 5-13

Previous Competitions

2000 - Washington, D.C.

The World Deaf Friendly Games were hosted at Gallaudet University, where the USA team emerged victorious with the gold medal.

1 USA

1998 - Japan

The Japan-American Deaf Goodwill Baseball Games took place in Japan, with the USA team securing the gold medal.

1 USA

1996 - Venezuela

The Venezuela Pan Am Baseball Championship was held in Venezuela, where the USA Deaf Baseball Team won the gold medal.

1 USA

Notable Deaf Players in MLB History

William "Dummy" Hoy was the most successful Deaf player in baseball history. He played 15 seasons in the major leagues from 1888-1902, spending most of his career as a center fielder. He collected 2,048 hits, stole 596 bases, and recorded 725 runs batted in.

Some sources also credit him as one of the early influences behind modern umpire hand signals. Because he could not hear balls and strikes, umpires would raise their right arm to signal a strike and their left arm to signal a ball, a practice that later became standard for all umpires that is still in use today.

In the 21st century, Hoy received consideration from the Veterans Committee for induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. His nickname — "Dummy" — was a common nickname at the time for those who did not speak.

Hoy played for the following teams — Washington Nationals (1888-1889), Buffalo Bisons (1890), St. Louis Browns (1891), Washington Senators (1892-1893), Cincinnati Reds (1894-1897, 1902), Louisville Colonels (1898-1899), and Chicago White Sox (1901).



Curtis Pride is widely regarded as the most successful modern deaf Major League Baseball (MLB) player. Deaf from birth, he overcame adversity and went on to excel in multiple sports in high school. Pride then attended the College of William & Mary on a basketball scholarship before focusing on baseball.

Pride made his MLB debut with the Montreal Expos in 1993, becoming the first deaf major-league player since 1945. Over 11 seasons (1993-2006), he appeared in 421 games for six teams — including the Detroit Tigers, New York Yankees and Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim — compiling a .250 batting average with 20 home runs and 82 RBIs.

After his playing career, Pride became head coach at Gallaudet University (2009-2024), a school for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students, and in 2015 was named MLB's Ambassador for Inclusion.

Pride's journey as a deaf individual stands as a powerful example that disability need not limit dreams.



WHY WE PLAY



Empowering Deaf Athletes to compete, connect, and lead

Our Drive for Change

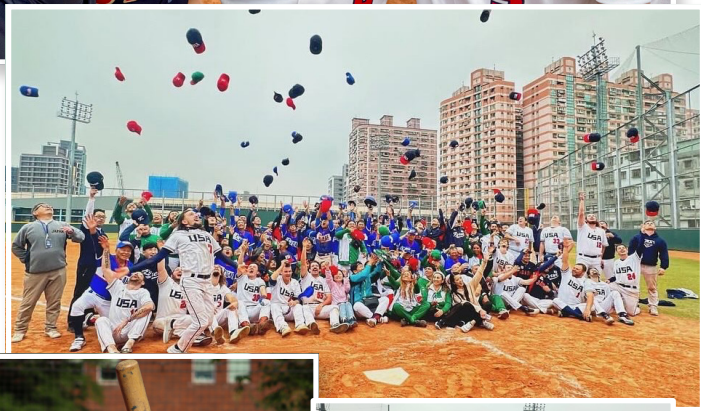
Deaf athletes have the talent — but not always the access.

As school programs fade and opportunities decline, Deaf players face barriers to coaching, role models, and belonging.

USA Deaf Baseball bridges that gap through development, mentorship, and leadership programs.

Our Ongoing Impact

- ★ More than 60 Deaf athletes represented Team USA internationally
- ★ Multiple youth clinics hosted nationwide
- ★ Partnerships promoting Deaf inclusion
- ★ ASL-first environments for families and athletes
- ★ Community that extends beyond the field



YOUTH CLINICS

Inspiring the next generation

"My son never felt included in Little League. After joining a USA Deaf Baseball clinic, he found confidence and community."

Deaf Youth Parent

Building Confidence & Deaf Pride

Our Youth Clinics bring athletes who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing together to learn, compete, and connect – all through ASL.

Led by Deaf and signing coaches, athletes train without barriers and discover the joy of baseball in a community that understands them.

What Our Clinics Provide

- ★ Coaching fully in ASL
- ★ Skill stations & guided drills
- ★ Teamwork & sportsmanship
- ★ Mentorship from Team USA players
- ★ Safe space for families & the Deaf community

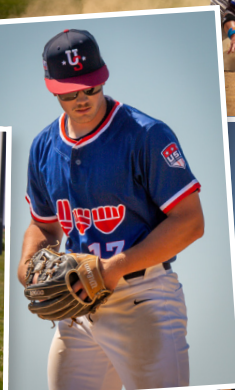


Past & Future Youth Clinics

Date	Location
May 2025	Washington, D.C.
June 2025	Austin, TX
Dec. 2025	Austin, TX
Fall 2026	Salt Lake City, UT; Frederick, MD; Rochester, NY; Manchaca, TX; Council Bluffs, IA; St. Paul, MN
2027 Season	10+ Clinics nationwide
Summer 2027	National Deaf Baseball Camp



HIGHLIGHTS



Support Team USA Deaf Baseball

Road to Japan!

Our national team is proud to represent the United States as we prepare for the 2026 World Deaf Baseball Championship in Japan, scheduled for November 1–3, 2026. This will be one of the biggest moments for Deaf baseball athletes to showcase their talent, teamwork, and dedication on an international stage.

To make this dream possible, each player must raise \$4,500 to cover essential costs such as:

- ★ Airfare and travel
- ★ Lodging and accommodations
- ★ Meals and daily allowances
- ★ Uniforms and equipment
- ★ Logistics and incidentals

Your support helps our players and coaches represent the United States in Japan, not only as athletes, but as role models, mentors, and ambassadors for the Deaf community.

Supporting the Next Generation

We believe in giving back and growing the game. That's why 10% of every donation will go toward our Youth Baseball Fund, helping to support youth clinics, training programs, and opportunities for Deaf and Hard of Hearing players nationwide. Your contribution helps both today's national athletes and tomorrow's stars.

Join Our Journey

Every dollar, every share, and every word of encouragement makes a difference. Your support will help us compete at the highest level while continuing to build inclusion and pride within the Deaf sports community.

Help us bring Team USA Deaf Baseball to Japan in 2026 — and keep the spirit of the game alive for generations to come.

Thank you for believing in our mission and supporting Deaf baseball!

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USA Deaf Baseball is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization.
Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.
No goods or services were provided in exchange for
this donation unless otherwise stated.

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Every practice, tournament, and camp brings us one step closer to Japan. Your support helps cover travel, lodging, equipment, and accessibility for every athlete, coach, and staff.

Help Send Team USA Deaf to Japan - Donate Today!

GiveButter

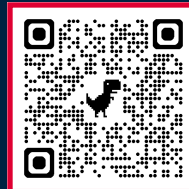
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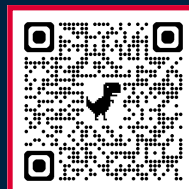
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USA DEAF BASEBALL

Empowering Deaf Athletes with Baseball



Who We Are

We field a national Deaf baseball team that competes internationally — and aims for the Deaflympics in the future. As a **nonprofit organization**, we also host youth clinics and tournaments across the country, creating a rare space where athletes who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing can play freely, communicate fully, and belong completely.

On November 1–3, 2026, USA Deaf Baseball will compete in the **World Deaf Baseball Championship** in Japan.

2026 Road to Japan

From Las Vegas tournaments to community events and tune-up games in Iowa and Rochester, USA Deaf Baseball is gaining momentum for the **World Deaf Baseball Championship** in Japan (Nov. 1–3, 2026).



March 2026
Las Vegas, NV



June 2026
Des Moines, IA



September 2026
Rochester, NY



November 2026
Kanagawa, Japan

How Your Support Helps



Team Travel

Supports all travel and competition expenses for the **World Deaf Baseball Championship**:

- ★ International travel
- ★ Lodging & meals
- ★ Training & practice facilities
- ★ Equipment & uniforms
- ★ Logistics & transportation

Youth Baseball Clinics

A portion of all donations supports clinics for Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth by helping to:

- ★ Provide equipment and facilities
- ★ Support volunteer coaches' travel
- ★ Promote inclusion, teamwork, & leadership



Follow us on social media



| @usadeafbaseball

Contact

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