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Official News Release:

## **“Bound 4 Beijing Tour” 2008 Olympic Team to Play at Rapid City in July of 2008**

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OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. – The Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) announced today the schedule for the 2008 Bound 4 Beijing Tour which will feature the 2008 USA Softball Women’s National Team competing in over 40 cities in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The tour will kick off February 9 with a game against back-to-back National Champions, the University of Arizona Wildcats

“The Amateur Softball Association is proud to be able to organize the Bound 4 Beijing Tour for the National Team as well as for the softball enthusiasts across the U.S.,” said ASA Executive Director Ron Radigonda. “It’s going to be an exciting year for our women’s program as they look to a fourth-consecutive Gold Medal and what better way to get it started than with a tour across the United States. Our local associations have done a great job in hosting these stops, providing the opportunity for our team to compete against the best teams in the country on American soil.”



The 2008 Women’s National Team, who will travel to Beijing in August to defend their three gold-medals, will make 42 stops across the country competing in over 60 games. The team will compete against NCAA Division I opponents, Regional All-Star teams as well as International Competition.

“We’re excited to be able to travel across the country and showcase our talented team and hopefully get everyone excited for the Olympic Games,” said Cat Osterman who will be making her second tour. “Some of the most talented softball players of the world are in the United States so it will be good to get out there and face some of the top athletes in the sport. It’s a great way to prepare for the ultimate stage, the Olympics”.

“This is an incredible opportunity for the South Dakota Amateur Softball Association, the city of Rapid City, and the entire state of South Dakota,” said ASA Area Commissioner Rick DenHerder. “We are pleased to be a part of USA Softball History. Not to mention the excitement of having a USA Olympic team competing here in Rapid City. It certainly ranks in the top events of this kind to ever take place in the region,” DenHerder said, noting that Rapid City is the only upper Midwest location on the tour schedule. “Softball enthusiasts of all ages will have the opportunity to see and meet the world’s most elite fast pitch softball players as they make their way across the country in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.”

Highlighting the tour will be six-consecutive weekly national televised games on ESPN2 in April and May along with four other games slated for July, rounding out over 20 hours of softball programming on the ESPN family of networks. The team will also return to the venue where they have secured back-to-back World Cup Titles as they will make two stops in Oklahoma City at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex, March 24-26 and June 6-8. The six games in Oklahoma City will be a part of the televised package including an International match up against a 2008 Olympic opponent on June 8.

“The Bound 4 Beijing Tour is great exposure for not only the team but also for the sport of softball. It provides us an opportunity to play in front of fans that may not otherwise have the chance to see us compete,” says head Coach Mike Candrea. “It’s a long haul as we will play six months of competitive softball but in the end it will help us prepare for our ultimate goal, a fourth-consecutive Gold Medal.”

In between all the game, the team will also gather together three times for training camps in various locations. After the final game of the Tour in Irvine, Calif. the team will travel to Beijing on Aug. 4 for the Olympic Games. Competition will start Aug. 12 with the Gold Medal Game being played on Aug. 21.

For additional information please contact Rick DenHerder at 343-7684 ext 203 or 431-0706.

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