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Hamilton Earns Spot on USA Baseball Women’s National Team

Former Eagle catcher preparing to play in the Women’s Baseball World Cup in South Korea

FULLERTON, Calif. – Former Georgia Southern softball player A.J. Hamilton’s playing days are far from over. The four-year starting catcher for the Eagles (2013-16) has earned a spot on the USA Baseball Women’s National Team and will represent the United States in the upcoming Women’s Baseball World Cup held in South Korea.
"I am absolutely thrilled to have this opportunity," Hamilton said. "When they called my name, I think my mouth dropped to the floor. I didn't feel like my hitting was where I needed it to be, but I am excited and thankful to keep playing."

"I'm very happy for A.J. to earn this opportunity," Georgia Southern head softball coach Annie Smith said. "She has worked very hard and deserves this honor. It will be a great experience for her as she gets to continue playing and I know she will represent both Georgia Southern and the country well."

Hamilton, who listed as a catcher and outfielder, was one of 40 players invited to the final trials held in Fullerton, California. The final trials concluded a process that started in Cary, North Carolina, over the summer and saw over 70 players, ranging in age from 16 to 42, attempt to make the team. She is one of just two catchers and six outfielders on the 20-player team and she is also one of two players from the state of Florida that earned a spot on the squad. Hamilton becomes the first player in Sun Belt Conference history to make the team.

The team, which is ranked No. 2 in the world heading into the upcoming tournament, will continue to train in Fullerton, Villa Park and Compton, California, for five days before flying out to South Korea. The Women's Baseball World Cup will be contested at the Hyundai-Gijang Dream Ballpark Sept. 3-11. USA opens the tournament against No. 9 Hong Kong on Saturday, Sept. 3. Team USA will then play Chinese Taipei the following day followed by a tilt against Australia.

Hamilton wrapped up her softball career at Georgia Southern seventh all-time in program history for games played (227) and sixth in program history with 24 home runs. Her final two home runs of her career were against No. 8 UL Lafayette at home and on the road at in-state rival Georgia State. The solo home run against the nationally ranked Ragin' Cajuns was made even sweeter by the fact that it came on her Senior Day at Eagle Field.

Hamilton is also tied for fifth for most doubles in a single game (two at UNCG on March 16, 2014) and her 2016 campaign has her seventh for most home runs in a single season (10).

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The 20 players, ranging in age from 16 to 42, were selected from the 38 participants in the 2016 Women's National Team Trials. The team will train for five days in Villa Park, Fullerton, and Compton, Calif., before departing for South Korea to play in the World Cup.

A total of 10 different states will be represented on the 2016 Women's National Team. California is the most represented state with five players, followed by Texas with three. Virginia, South Carolina, Florida and Washington each have a pair of players, while Nevada, Louisiana, Hawaii and New York have one apiece.
Ten players on the 2016 roster - Samantha Cobb, Alex Fulmer, Brittany Gomez, Jade Gortarez, Tamara Holmes, Anna Kimbrell, Stacy Piagno, Cydnee Sanders, Marti Sementelli, Michelle Snyder, Malaika Underwood and Kelsie Whitmore - were also part of the 2015 USA Baseball Women's National Team that won a gold medal at the Pan American Games in Toronto.

The No. 2-ranked USA Baseball Women's National Team will face No. 9 Hong Kong in the Opening Round of the WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup on September 3. Be sure to follow the Women's National Team on Twitter (@USABaseballWNT) for scores, updates, photos and more.

The roster for the 2016 Women's National Team is as follows:

**2016 USA Baseball Women's National Team - Name, Position (Hometown)**

Megan Baltzell, UT/LHP (Stafford, Va.)
Samantha Cobb, OF/RHP (Garland, Texas)
Shelby Estocado, IF/OF (Las Vegas, Nev.)
Alex Fulmer, OF/RHP (Little Mountain, S.C.)
Amanda Gianelloni, IF (Napoleonville, La.)
Brittany Gomez, OF (New Braunfels, Texas)
Jade Gortarez, IF/RHP (Riverside, Calif.)
A.J. Hamilton, C/OF (Tallahassee, Fla.)
Tamara Holmes, OF (Albany, Calif.)
Amalia Hopson, UT/RHP (Sequim, Wash.)
Jessica Iwata, IF/RHP (Honolulu, Hawaii)
Anna Kimbrell, C (Fort Mill, S.C.)
Meggie Meidlinger, RHP/IF (Sterling, Va.)
Stacy Piagno, RHP (St. Augustine, Fla.)
Cydnee Sanders, IF/RHP (Magnolia, Texas)
Marti Sementelli, RHP, Sherman Oaks, Calif.
Michelle Snyder, IF/RHP (Wenatchee, Wash.)
Sara Tobias, RHP (New York, N.Y.)
Malaika Underwood, IF (San Diego, Calif.)
Kelsie Whitmore, OF/RHP (Temecula, Calif.)

**Women's National Team Coaching Staff**

Jonathan Pollard, Manager (Dracut, Mass.)
Matthew Weagle, Pitching Coach (Auburn, Mass.)
Kerry Kincaid, Assistant Coach (Knightdale, N.C.)
Tim Mayo, Assistant Coach (Enfield, Conn.)

**Administration**

Ashley Bratcher, WNT Program Director (Raleigh, N.C.)
Emma Lingan, Press Officer (Fairfax, Va.)
Kim Moncel, Athletic Trainer (South Range, Wisc.)
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