

All Star Softball Spotlight

By Chris Moody

The Virginia Commonwealth Games prides itself on providing an opportunity where athletes compete in some of the highest levels of competition as well as perform on some of the best quality of facilities they may ever get to stand on. This summer, there will be a new competition that does both. This event will help grow the Games as well as its footprint on the LU campus and the Lynchburg area.

Announcing the newest addition to the Commonwealth Games the All-Star Softball Competition. Six to Eight of the top Elite 18U girls travel softball teams will be invited to compete at Kamphuis Field on LU's campus.

Games Director Amanda Mangum said the event will be held alongside the All-Star Baseball Competition on July 17-18th, the weekend prior to the main games.

The Games will be a focus of some of the state's best scholastic-age talent in both diamond sports. As a showcase of elite level players, it will attract college coaches and recruiters as well as fans.

"We wanted to add something else exciting to the weekend. The weekend prior to main games kicks things off! This will take it to a whole new level," Mangum said.

She said the goal was to add another All-Star tournament, but the question was which sport. Given the amazing facilities at Liberty University and the growth the Games had in softball for 2020, it seemed to make sense. Fans being able to walk across the newer bridge on campus to easily get to each ball field will hopefully attract eyes to both events.

"I'm excited for these male and female athletes to compete on fields of this quality. They may never have that opportunity again," Mangum said.

This new competition will be akin to the baseball tournament that is a marquee event at the games, running the weekend prior to the regular games and outside the standard open-entry event.

Mangum said that softball coordinator John McPhail, who is part of USA Softball, will keep an eye on standings as well as Elite travel teams' performance in upcoming tournaments this spring.

The team invitational format is different from baseball, where players try out as individuals in their region of the state. Four teams are then formed to come compete at the Games.

Softball is the latest addition as an Allstar event, but Mangum said it will not be the last. The Commonwealth Games hopes to add more showcase events in the future.