

Katie Horne and Jordan Sikes Picked for American Softball Team, Played in Amsterdam



Katie Horne (left) and Jordan Sikes

In the Spring of 2017 two Anson High School students, freshman Katie Horne and junior Jordan Sikes, were contacted by a man from Ohio about traveling to Europe and playing indoor softball against teams much older and experienced than they were. The girls had been nominated by their Softball Coach Hailey Jarman who had made this very trip a few years ago. They had no idea then, the amazing experience and trip of a lifetime that was in their future.

Kirt Whiteside, Founder of the Queen of Diamonds Showcase, the Q Sport and "The Cup" Indoor Fastpitch Softball Tournament, started his recruitment of these two Anson County girls in May. The rest is a whirlwind of events that ended a few weeks ago when they arrived back in the United States after finishing 5th overall out of 16 teams, and the top American team that competed in the European Cup '18, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Katie and Jordan faced professional teams that were older and had played together for years when they traveled "across the pond." They also faced several teams that will be competing together in the 2020 Summer Olympics, like the Euro Stars from the Netherlands, the Great Britain Select and the Czech Republic team.

There were six American teams, made up from top high school players from all across the country who travelled together and competed in this newer version of Fastpitch Softball indoors. Katie and Jordan were on the USA Avengers Team with Head Coach Monte Gaddis, a head high school and travel softball coach from Winchester, Indiana. Their Assistant Coach was retired Ole Miss Head Softball Coach Tommy McLaughlin of Oxford, Mississippi. Their teammates came from California, Virginia, Oklahoma, Kentucky and across the USA. They did not get to meet their teammates until the second night of their trip when they started playing, but it did not take long at all for these girls to form close friendships and memories to last a lifetime.

The winter months last a bit longer in Europe so indoor softball is more popular there, and there were over 4,000 fans watching these girls compete. There are many differences the girls had to adjust to. Among the biggest ones was sliding into bases on the gymnasium floors, trying not to hit the ceilings with the balls which could result in an out, and starting off with a 1-1 count.

Defensively, and in both their batting averages and on base percentages, Katie and Jordan were leaders on the team.

There was an educational component to this trip as well, as they studied about and were exposed to different cultures, cuisines and laws of Amsterdam and France. They also toured major museums, cathedrals, and landmarks such as the Notre Dame Cathedral, Flower Markets and the Anne Frank House/Museum in Amsterdam, and the Eiffel Tower, Louvre, Sacre'-Coeur Museum, and Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

Whitesides told Katie and Jordan from the beginning that he wanted athletes who had talent, but who were also great people and could get along well with other athletes because that was key in tournaments like these.

Representing your country and playing a sport you love is the opportunity of a lifetime, and these Anson County girls represented us well on and off the playing field. Both ladies are currently playing on the varsity team at Anson High School under the coaching supervision of Hailey Jarman and Cassie Scoggins. Jordan has already verbally committed to play at Lander University after high school graduation next year.

Jordan is the daughter of Joe and Patricia Sikes of Ansonville and Katie is the daughter of Dennis and Heather Horne of Wadesboro.

Angelena Castro is Among Delegates to Attend United Nations-USA Global Engagement Summit



To demonstrate the overwhelming support for strong U.S. United Nations engagement, Americans from across the country met at the United Nations-USA Headquarters in New York City, February 22-23 to participate in sessions on pressing global issues like climate change, peace and security, human rights, the refugee crisis and more. Angelena Castro, a native of Lilesville, participated in this event.



Angelina is a junior Journalism-Mass Communications major at NC A&T State University in Greensboro. She is involved with United Nations projects that focus on empowering women and girls.

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