

PNCC Jaycee Trust Travelling Fellowship Scheme - Report

Jaden Hita – NZ Junior Blacksox - Softball

2023 WBSC U18 Men's Softball World Cup Hermosillo, Mexico

Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to the Jaycee Trust Travelling Fellowship Scheme and the support from PNCC. I am so greatly appreciative of the Jaycee Travelling fund for making my forever dream of representing New Zealand come true in getting me to the WBSC U18 Men's Softball World Cup in Hermosillo, Mexico in November 2023. This opportunity allowed me to build my player profile not only within NZ but across many other different countries. The experience was truly unforgettable, and has motivated me to share the profound impact it had on me to become a better person, leader and athlete, with others in our sport and community.

I was fortunate to be one of 16 players throughout New Zealand to have the opportunity to represent New Zealand at the WBSC U18 Men's Softball World Cup. This was a massive achievement not only for me but for the local softball community and I was extremely proud to represent New Zealand and Manawatu on the world stage. This was a huge stepping stone in my progression to future goals, achievements and contributions to the local softball community.

Being a self-financed endeavour made it really challenging for myself and family to pull together the finances needed to get me to Hermosillo, Mexico, with many funding initiatives and sleepless nights to fundraise enough money in the hope of my dream coming true. But though the generous support of the Jaycee Travelling Fellowship Trust my dream of representing New Zealand became a reality as it enabled myself to raise enough financial support and to fully focus on the goal ahead and compete at the WBSC U18 Softball World Cup representing NZ and the Manawatu with pride. The Jaycee Trust Travelling Fellowship Scheme and support from the PNCC played a significant role in supporting me in reaching my dream of representing NZ on the world stage.

During the campaign build-up, I had the opportunity to participate in multiple games, tournaments, training camps, all with a high performance mind-set and environment. The campaign build-up took place in many different locations across NZ, in Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland, where we played multiple games against the top tier P1 Men's sides that the country has to offer, before heading into a series of pre-tournament international games held in Mexico. What I gained from being a part of this awesome experience significantly contributed to my personal growth, leadership, teamwork and high performance sporting skills. I gained many experiences from the tournament, particularly through the exposure I gained and the diverse playing styles and competition, along with skills development and training techniques, thus improving my own abilities and knowledge. This awesome opportunity also enabled me to get insight into networking opportunities, build relationships, and learn different training methods thanks to being surrounded by other high performance athletes and coaching. Future goals of mine to build on from what I have already achieved and experienced, is to continue representing New Zealand in higher age categories and international competitions at a high performance level.

Since my return and in an effort to create a positive impact on the local community and sport, and share this experience and knowledge with others, I have conducted training clinics and sessions for the local youth players, sharing my insight gained from my international experience. I organised these training sessions to promote the sport among young athletes and encourage active participation within youth. Mentoring and inspiring young athletes, to aim high backed by hard work and dedication, showing them that anything is possible. I also intend to continue to conduct coaching and mentoring training sessions all year round, both in a group and individual capacity, to help further establish our youth and to nurture talent and provide structured training and mentoring with a high performance focus. In addition I also intend to participate in local games and tournaments to inspire and engage these young athletes to complete to their fullest potential.

In short, the New Zealand U18s Junior Black Sox has been a transformative experience, made through the incredible support of the Jaycee Trust Travelling Fellowship Scheme. The gained insights, personal development, and ongoing contributions I am now able to provide back to the community and sport will undoubtedly have a positive and long lasting impact, and I hope to inspire others to achieve their goals and dreams.

Thank you for your support. Sincerely, Jaden Hita

