

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Events](#) | [Elected Officials](#) | [Departments](#) | [Online Services](#) | [About Taylor](#) | [Contact](#) |

## 2009 World Series Summary: Arizona defeats Aruba for title

TAYLOR, MICHIGAN – The 13- and 14-year-old all-stars from the Mountain View Little League from Scottsdale, Arizona, won early, often and always.

From the time the boys formed a team, they could not be defeated. They won 24 straight games, culminating in the championship of the Junior League World Series of baseball on August 22 at Taylor's Heritage Park.

Along the way, they won the Arizona state championship, the USA Western Regional Tournament played in California and the USA championship in the World Series semi-finals. Actually, they won the USA title just hours before defeating Oranjestad, Aruba, 9-1, to become the best Junior League team in the world.

In the World Series – the 29th straight played in Taylor – Team Arizona won six straight games. In the USA Pool, Scottsdale defeated Middlebury, Indiana (USA Central Regional champions), 4-0; Easley, South Carolina (Southeast), 10-1; Albuquerque, New Mexico (Southwest), 7-4; and Jackson, New Jersey (East), 10-8.

Indiana defeated South Carolina, 9-4, in the final pool play game to ensure a three-way tie for second in the pool between Indiana, New Mexico and New Jersey. Indiana advanced to the USA title game by virtue of allowing less runs than the other two teams.

In the International Pool, the Puerto Rico national champions from Yabucoa also went unbeaten in four games, defeating Canadian national champions from Coquitlam, British Columbia; a team from Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy, champion of the Europe/Middle East/Africa Region; the Latin America champions from Oranjestad, Aruba; and the Asia-Pacific champions from Saipan of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Aruba, playing in the Junior League World Series for the first time, finished 3-1 to earn a spot in the International championship game vs. Puerto Rico. In a Friday night game that lasted 4 hours and 5 minutes, not including a rain delay of more than an hour, Aruba stunned Puerto Rico in a 10-inning thriller, 7-5.

Due to the late finish, the USA championship game was moved to 10 a.m. Saturday. In another workmanlike effort, Arizona defeated Indiana, 6-2.

The world title game began less than five hours later before an ESPN audience and thousands of fans at World Series Field. Arizona scored four runs in the second inning, one in the fourth and four more in the fifth to roll to a 9-1 victory over Aruba.

On offense, Jimmy DiTroia's three-run homer and Michael Salazar's two-run blast were the key. On defense, pitchers Grant Martinez and Ryan Riggs combined on a three-hitter.

For the series, Arizona's Michael DeRegis (.727), Dylan Cozens (.550), Cody Erickson (.450), DiTroia (.412) and Duncan Morfitt (.364) led the team with their bats. On the mound, Martinez and Cozens had two pitching victories apiece.

Also part of the world championship team were players Luc Trotta, Zach Janikis, Lucas Jacobi, Jake Anderson and Maurice White, plus coaches Darrin Trotta and James DiTroia.

The team earned run average was 2.33 in the six games of the World Series and Manager Steve Erickson noted that Arizona rarely gave up more than two runs in any of its tournament games. Erickson credited that to quality fielding as well.

"It's incredible to have any team say they won two championships in one day," he said. "Everyone did a great job. I can honestly say every player contributed. They each made key plays, great pitching performances, key hits, key bunts... It was a total team effort."

Three of the teams – Aruba, Italy and New Mexico – were represented in Taylor for the first time.

Erickson and Aruba Manager Lyrick Pourier praised the organizers of the World Series.

"I can see why Taylor, Michigan, has had the World Series for 29 years," Erickson said. "The volunteers, how they treat the kids, how it's run – they do an amazing job. This is something our players will talk about the rest of their lives."

"We had very much fun," Pourier added. "We can't ask for more. We will remember Taylor always. The people were amazing. No words can describe the feeling. Taylor is always in my heart."

"The 2009 World Series had a little bit of everything," said Director Greg Bzura. "We had wild high-scoring games, record-setting performances and nail-biting pitchers duels. We had amazing weekday crowds, fans of all teams and an excellent audience for the championship game on ESPN. The sportsmanship and camaraderie between the players and teams has never been better. It was a wonderful year."

– Dave Gorgon

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