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## Junior League World Series will return to Taylor for 29th straight year

The City of Taylor will be a host city for the Junior League World Series of baseball for the 29th consecutive year.

Organizers of the World Series for the best teams of 13- and 14-year-olds have received word from Stephen Keener, president and chief executive officer of Little League Baseball and Softball.

The 2009 JLWS is scheduled for August 16-22 at World Series Field in Heritage Park, 12111 Pardee Road. The championship game on August 12 between the winners of the United States and International pools will be televised by the ESPN family of networks.

Taylor has hosted the Junior League World Series since its inception in 1981. The event has grown to include five regional champions from the United States as well as the champions of Latin America, Europe/the Middle East/Africa, Asia-Pacific, Canada and Mexico or Puerto Rico in alternating years.

Greg Bzura, founder and director of the World Series, said organizers have been planning the 2009 World Series since the last series ended in August. He said they are confident that they will get the nod to host the series year after year, but feel "thrilled" when they get the official word.

"We'd be shocked if we didn't get it, but it's still not official until they have a board meeting and board announces the sites of all eight World Series," Bzura said. "Our volunteers work hard to make sure the World Series is a memorable event for everyone that attends, especially the players, who turn in some incredible performances year after year."

The defending champion is from Willemstad, Curacao, which defeated Hilo, Hawaii, in the world championship game, 5-2. Curacao became the first team from the Netherlands Antilles and the first team from the Caribbean to win the trophy in the 13- and 14-year-old division.

Last year, the Taylor South Little League, which hosts the series, hired a nationally experienced, Little League-approved company to install new lighting at the field, a task that was completed just prior to the start of the series. Bzura said the new lights were necessary to make it safer for players during night games -- and they made a huge difference in 2008.

Series organizers are seeking grants, corporate sponsors and other fund-raising ventures to raise funds to pay for the \$120,000 energy-efficient lighting system. The Detroit Tigers Foundation kicked off fund-raising activities with a pledge to donate \$20,000 to the effort. Series volunteers have raised another \$20,000 and must raise the rest and make annual payments.

Gold-plated coins commemorating the "Light Up the Series" effort are being sold for \$20 each. Each coin is numbered and comes in a case. One side of the coin features an artist's rendering of World Series Field and "1981," the year the series started. The other side has a rendering of baseball field lights. Each has a grooved edge, like a quarter. Bzura said the coins will be available until all 1,000 have been sold.

To order a coin, send a check payable to the Junior League World Series to 22667 Maplelawn, Taylor, MI 48180. Include \$2 per coin for shipping and handling. Donations and contributions can be sent to the same address.

Orders also will be taken by phone at (734) 287-8836.

For more information on the Junior League World Series in Taylor, visit the Web site [www.cityoftaylor.com/worldseries](http://www.cityoftaylor.com/worldseries).

### World Series Lineup

The following sites and dates for the eight World Series tournaments in Little League Baseball and Softball have been announced:

#### Baseball World Series

- Little League (11-12-year-olds) - August 21-30 in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania
- Junior League (13-14) - August 16-22 in Taylor, Michigan
- Senior League (14-16) - August 16-22 in Bangor, Maine
- Big League (16-18) - July 29-August 5 in Easley, South Carolina

#### Softball World Series

- Little League (11-12) - August 13-19 in Portland, Oregon
- Junior League (13-14) - August 16-22 in Kirkland, Washington
- Senior League (14-16) - August 9-15 in Lower Sussex, Delaware
- Big League (14-18) - August 6-12 in Kalamazoo, Michigan

Specific times and dates for all games, including games to be televised, will be announced in June 2009.

Little League Baseball and Softball is the world's largest organized youth sports program, with more than 2.6 million players and one million adult volunteers in every U.S. state and scores of other countries.

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