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World Series: Thursday's games to determine finalists for USA, International championships

Thursday's games will determine finalists for USA, International championships in the Junior League World Series in Taylor

TAYLOR, MICHIGAN – Four games on Thursday will determine the final four in the 30th annual Junior League Baseball World Series at Taylor's Heritage Park.

The best teams of 13- and 14-year-old players from around the world face must-win games to qualify for the Friday's USA and International championship games. Their ultimate goal is the World Series title game on Saturday.

The Junior League World Series the big brother of the Little League World Series for 12-year-olds in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Teams arrive in Taylor as regional champions and compete for bigger prizes. Thursday is day five of the weeklong series.

Thursday's Games

Taipei City, Chinese Taipei (3-0) vs. Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico (2-1), 11 a.m.

Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada (0-3) vs. Guatemala City, Guatemala (2-1), 2 p.m.

El Monte, California (2-1) vs. Mechanicsville, Virginia (1-2), 5 p.m.

Tyler, Texas (2-1) vs. Freehold Township, New Jersey (1-2), 8 p.m.

Friday's Games

International Championship, 5 p.m.

United States Championship, 8 p.m.

Saturday's Schedule

Home Run Derby, 12:15 p.m.

World Championship Game: International Champion vs. USA Champion, 4 p.m.

The world championship game will be televised live on ESPN2.

Games are played on World Series Field at Heritage Park, 12111 Pardee Road, Taylor. Admission is \$5 per carload per day or \$10 for the entire week. Both prices include parking.

Pool Play Standings

USA Pool

California 2-1

Texas 2-1

Indiana 2-2

Virginia 1-2

New Jersey 1-2

International Pool

Chinese Taipei 3-0

Guatemala 2-1

Mexico 2-1

Ukraine 1-3

Canada 0-3

Wednesday's Highlights

The Latin America champs from Guatemala City, Guatemala, edged European champ Kirovograd Center/Rivne, Ukraine, 3-2, to take a step closer to the International championship game. With the game tied at 2-2, Guatemala's Julio Alvarado singled, advanced on a fielder's choice and scored on an error. That was the difference in the ballgame. Guatemala pitchers Hans Werner and Jose Valls combined on a two-hitter, striking out seven. Ukraine committed six errors in the game. Ukraine pitcher Mykola Liakhovetsky allowed just one earned run and four hits. Guatemala improved to 2-1 in the International Pool; Ukraine finished pool play at 1-3.

Three home runs powered USA West champion El Monte, California, to a must-win 5-1 victory over Southwest champ Tyler, Texas. First-inning homers by Gabriel Juarez and Fernando Rosales and a sixth-inning homer by Cesar Torres accounted for all of California's runs. Texas' Ryan Cheatham doubled and scored on an error in the bottom of the first for his team's only run. Torres, Juarez and Antonio Ruiz combined on a five-hitter, with Torres getting the win. Both teams ended the day tied on top of the USA Pool at 2-1.

A walk-off grand slam by Drew Ellis gave Central champ Jeffersonville, Indiana, a 7-4 victory over Southeast champ Mechanicsville, Virginia. With Indiana trailing 4-3 and one out in the bottom of the seventh, Damin Smith walked, Ben Shahroudi was safe on a fielder's choice and Tyler Sariscsany was hit by a pitch to load the bases. With the infield drawn in, Ellis launched a fast ball 321 feet to deep right field to give Indiana its second victory in four games. Virginia's Jonathan Sheppard and Jeffrey Decker homered for earlier in the game. With one game left in USA Pool play, Virginia is 1-2.

Dario Macias threw a two-hitter and struck out 10 as the Mexican national champions of Guaymas, Sonora, kept their World Series hopes alive with an 11-1 win over Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada. Mexico (2-1) will play unbeaten Chinese Taipei (3-0) at 11 a.m. Thursday and must win to have a shot at playing for the International championship on Friday. Canada (0-3) will attempt to play spoiler in its 2 p.m. Thursday game against Guatemala (2-1). In Wednesday's game, Mexico scored four runs in each of the third and fourth innings, added two in the fourth and one more in the fifth to win by the 10-run mercy rule. Mexico had eight hits, but also took advantage of five Canada errors. Macias – the eighth hitter in the lineup – went 2-for-2, scored once and knocked in three runs. Teammate Gaston Villasenor went 1-for-1, scored twice and knocked in two runs.

Volunteer Umpires Set World Series Record

The 15-man umpire crew in Taylor set a JLWS record for experience: a combined 378 years with 285 different assignments at state/division, regional and world

series. The umpires have a cumulative total of more than 25,000 individual games. The umpires, who are all volunteers, are assigned to the World Series based on their experience and recommendations. This year's crew includes Director of Umpires George Glick of Fort Wayne, Indiana; Orland and Greg King of Kenton, Ohio; Lowell Brummett of Mechanicsville, Virginia; Jim Connelly of North Braddock, Pennsylvania; Michael Davelaar of Oranjestad, Aruba; Brian Groves of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada; Thomas Marshall of Escondido, California; Thomas McDonald of San Antonio, Texas; Kerry McFadden of Anderson, Indiana; Ken Owens of Taylor, Michigan; Robert Rayburn of Houston, Texas; David Tomasco of Milford, Connecticut; Harvey Waldron of Santa Ana, California; and Mike Wilson of Senoia, Georgia.

From Taylor to the Pros

A number of Junior League World Series players have gone on to become even more famous. At least 11 players went on to play Major League baseball: Gary Sheffield, Brett Myers, Erik Bedard, Derek Bell, Jose and Javier Valentin, Erubial Durazo, Delino DeShields. Chad Hermanson, Shannon Withem and Adam Loewen. Others are University of Nebraska football Coach Bo Pelini, Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Matt Cassel and National Hockey League players Chris Dingman and Steve Reinprecht.

Lunch is on the Taylor Moose

Thursday will be the second straight day in which members of the Taylor Moose open their lodge to players and families for lunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lodge members provide the food, plus some outdoor games and prizes and time for relaxation. The Junior League World Series thanks the Taylor Moose for all of their contributions to the World Series and to the community throughout the year.

Best Buy Shoots the Shirts

Those shirts that are flying into the crowd during games are compliments of Best Buy, the major sponsor of the Junior League World Series. Best Buy makes a sizable donation annually to the World Series, but also provides dozens of volunteers who combine for hundreds of hours of help throughout the week. World Series Director Greg Bzura thanked Best Buy employees for their amazing and generous contributions to the series.

Need More Information?

The Junior League World Series website features up-to-date news throughout the World Series and a profile and rosters for each team. For information, visit www.cityoftaylor.com/worldseries. The World Series also offers regular updates via the social networking site Facebook. Search for JLWS – Junior League World Series – Taylor Michigan.

