

Umpire/announcer calls return to Taylor "pretty special"

Twenty-three years ago, Ed McCloskey was part of the umpire crew that worked the Junior League Baseball World Series in Taylor.

Back in 1987, the World Series was limited to 13-year-olds and the only international teams came from Mexico and Puerto Rico. The Taylor Northwest Little League had a team in the event that year and Jenny Hall became the first girl to play in the series.

That year, the series had a two-game knockout format. The West Rowland Heights Little League from California came out of the losers bracket and defeated Wappinger Falls, New York, twice to take the world championship.

That year, McCloskey was roommates with Orland King, a Kenton, Ohio, native who returns to the series annually and is known affectionately as "the legend of Taylor."

McCloskey loved the experience, he always remembered Taylor and he jumped at the chance to return to ump an alumni game in 1990.

This year – the 20th anniversary of that return visit and the 30th year of the World Series – McCloskey asked Director Greg Bzura if he could return once again. And Bzura extended an immediate invitation.

McCloskey, who lives in Florida, has been a volunteer umpire since 1980 – a year before the World Series started. He has umpired for 30 years in Little League, AAU, Pony, Colt, high school and small college levels. He is a current member of the West Coast Umpire Association and District 13 Little League Umpires.

He has worked 29 of the Little League tournaments – and is credited for training more than 2,000 umpires.

But McCloskey may be best known for his voice as a baseball announcer. For four years, he was the spring training voice of the New York Yankees at Legends Field in Tampa. He has announced the famed Tony Saladino High School Baseball Tournament for 20 years.

He has announced the Diamond Club Baseball Tournament at the University of South Florida for seven years and at Tiger Stadium in Lakeland for the last five years. For the last two years, he has been the "voice" of the RussMatt Baseball Invitational for college teams.

In addition to umpiring one of the JLWS crossover games late in the week, McCloskey said he was delighted when World Series public address announcer Jim Sicotte turned over the microphone to him during the week-long international tournament at Heritage Park.

"I think when you come back as an alumni umpire, you have the opportunity to help others, first and foremost, and be an example for returning umpires," McCloskey said. "Having the opportunity to announce a World Series game is pretty special."



Ed McCloskey back behind the microphone.

