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Sunday is Opening Day of Junior League Baseball World Series

Games of the 31st annual Junior League Baseball World Series will get under way at noon Sunday at Taylor's Heritage Park, 12111 Pardee Road.

The week-long World Series features the world's 10 best teams of 13- and 14-year-old players. The winner of the final game next Saturday morning is the world champion.

The international tournament in the suburban Detroit city of Taylor is the "big brother" of the Little League World Series for 12-year-olds in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

The World Series in Taylor features four games on Sunday (regional titles in parentheses):

- North Canton, Ohio (USA Central) vs. Johnston, Rhode Island (USA East), Noon
- Emilia, Italy (Europe) vs. Taoyuan, Chinese Taipei (Asia-Pacific), 2:45 p.m.
- Tucson, Arizona (USA West) vs. Tampa, Florida, (USA Southeast), 5:30 p.m.
- Maracaibo, Venezuela (Latin America) vs. Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, 8:15 p.m.

Rosenberg, Texas (USA Southwest) and Surrey, British Columbia (Canada) have the day off.

Admission is \$5 per carload per day or \$10 for the entire series. Both fees include parking.

A team from Chinese Taipei is the defending world champion.

Teams compete in round-robin games in either the USA Pool or the International Pool. Games start a bit earlier August 15-18: 11 a.m., 2 p.m. 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.

The top two teams in the International Pool standings play at 5 p.m. Friday, August 19. The top two teams in the USA Pool play at 8 p.m. The International champion plays the USA champion for the world title at 11 a.m. Saturday, August 20. The championship game is broadcast live on ESPN2.

NOTES

Opening ceremonies scheduled for Saturday night were scrapped due to storms featuring lightning and rain, a soaked field tarp that created dangerous walking conditions and a chance for further storms. World Series officials were pleased that the new tarp did its job in protecting the field. The fireworks went off at dusk as planned.

Earlier in the day, players and team coaching staffs received uniforms for the World Series, autographed baseballs and posed for official photos. Umpires also participated and had a meeting led by Umpire-in-Chief George Glick, who received applause for his 30 years working the World Series in Taylor.

A number of current or past professional baseball players played for teams in the Junior League World Series years before making it as stars in the big leagues. They include Gary Sheffield, Eric Bedard, Brett Myers, Jose and Javier Valentin, Erubiel Durazo, Chad Hermansen, Derek Bell, Delino DeShields, Shannon Withem and Adam Loewen. Sheffield and Bell were teammates on the Belmont Heights team from Tampa, Florida, that won the Junior League world championship in 1982. Some future major leaguers may be on the rosters in 2011.

Matt Cassel, who played in the World Series for Northridge, California, in 1995, is stating quarterback for the Kansas City Chiefs. Mark "Bo" Pelini, a member of the 1981 champions from Boardman, Ohio, went on to play safety for Ohio State University's football team and is now head football coach at the University of Nebraska. Chris Dingman and Steve Reinprecht, Junior League teammates in 1989 with Edmonton, Alberta, went on to play in the National Hockey League.

For more information, visit the website www.cityoftaylor.com/worldseries. To sponsor the World Series, call Director Greg Bzura at (734) 306-3113.



A tired Team Canada arrives at the Taylor Activity Building.

