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Four international teams qualify for the Junior League Baseball World Series in Taylor

TAYLOR, MICHIGAN – Four international champions have qualified for the Junior League Baseball World Series, which is set for August 12-18 at Taylor's Heritage Park.

Teams from Aruba, Chinese Taipei, Italy and Mexico have earned the right to compete for the world championship of the 13- and 14-year-old division of Little League Baseball.

Six more teams will be added to the field: the national champion of Canada and five regional champions from across the United States.

"The teams that play in the Junior League World Series are all champions by the time they arrive in Taylor," said Greg Bzura, founder and director of the World Series since it was founded in 1981. "They will have defeated the national champions of other countries or state champions. When they arrive here, they'll be ready to take on the best in the world."

Opening ceremonies of the 32nd annual Junior League Baseball World Series are set for the evening of Saturday, August 11. Games begin at noon on Sunday, August 12, and continue through the televised world championship game (ESPN) at 11 a.m. Saturday, August 18. Heritage Park is located at 12111 Pardee Road.

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

In fact, at least one of this year's JLWS qualifying teams – the Latin America champions from the Aruba North Little League in Oranjestad, Aruba – played in the Little League World Series last year. Aruba was the Caribbean regional champion in the Little League series in 2011.

In this year's Junior League Latin America regional played in San Jose, Costa Rica, the Aruba national champions emerged from a 12-team tournament, defeating all-stars from Costa Rica, Curacao, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Puerto Rico and St. Thomas of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Aruba avenged its only defeat in the tournament, to St. Thomas, with a 10-4 win in the finals.

Aruba's only other appearance in Taylor came in 2009 when the same league finished runner-up to world champion Scottsdale, Arizona.

In the Asia-Pacific region, a team from Chinese Taipei will play in the World Series for the third straight year. This time, a team from the Min-De Junior Little League in Tainan City emerged as Asia-Pacific champion, going unbeaten in a six-nation tournament in Nha Trang, Vietnam. The Tainan City all-stars defeated teams from the Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Saipan and Vietnam. They beat Saipan of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for the title, 5-1.

For the past two years, teams from Chinese Taipei have been the international teams to beat in the World Series. In 2010, a team from Taipei City won the world championship. Last year, a team from Taoyuan won the International title before finishing runner-up to the world champions from Tampa, Florida.

In the region that encompasses Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), a team from Lazio, Italy, won the right to play in the World Series. Eleven teams competed in the EMEA regional tournament in Kutno, Poland. The Italian national champions defeated teams from Moldova, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Poland, American military and native teams from Germany and the Czech Republic (11-8 in the regional finals).

This will mark the third appearance in the Junior League World Series for teams from Italy. Previously, a team from Friuli Venezia Giulia played in Taylor in 2009 and a team from Emilia represented the EMEA region in 2011.

The national champions of Mexico and Puerto Rico alternate automatic berths in the Junior League World Series and this year a team from the Las Puentes Little League in San Nicholas de Los Garza in Nuevo Leon will compete in Taylor.

This will be the 20th appearance in the series by a team from Mexico, dating back to 1986. A team from Mexicali, Baja California, won the world championship in 1988. In recent years, a team from Guaymas finished runner-up to world champ El Campo, Texas, in 2006.

Starting dates and locations of the six other qualifying tournaments are:

- July 31 in Vancouver, Washington (USA West)
- August 1 in Albuquerque, New Mexico (USA Southwest)
- August 1 in Lethbridge, Alberta (Canada)
- August 2 in Greenville, South Carolina (USA Southeast)
- August 3 in Fort Wayne, Indiana (USA Central)
- August 3 in Freehold Township, New Jersey (USA East)

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

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