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All 10 teams qualify for 32nd annual Junior League Baseball World Series in Taylor

TAYLOR, MICHIGAN – All 10 teams have qualified for the 2012 Junior League Baseball World Series, which gets under way Sunday at Taylor's Heritage Park.

The World Series features the best teams of 13- and 14-year-old ballplayers from around the globe. It is considered the "older brother" of the more famous Little League World Series for 12-year-olds played in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

This will be the 32nd straight year that the Junior League World Series is played in Taylor, where it was founded in 1981.

Five regional champions from the United States will compete in one pool. Five international teams will compete in a second pool. After a week of competition that starts Sunday, the USA and International champions will meet for the World Series title on Saturday, August 18.

The USA teams are Franklin Square, New York (East regional champion); North Canton, Ohio (Central); Manhattan Beach, California (West); Rockledge, Florida (Southeast); and Corpus Christi, Texas (West).

The international teams are Latin America champion Oranjestad, Aruba; Asia-Pacific champion Tainan City, Chinese Taipei; Lazio, Italy, the champion of a region that includes Europe, the Middle East and Africa; the national champion of Mexico from San Nicholas de Los Garza, Nuevo Leon; and the national champion of Canada from Calgary, Alberta.

The 10 teams will attempt to succeed the 2011 world champions from Palma Ceia/Bayshore Little League from Tampa, Florida – one of the rare leagues to win the World Series more than once.

Opening ceremonies of the World Series are set for 8 p.m. Saturday at Heritage Park. Admission is free to opening ceremonies and the public is invited. The night will include a colorful parade of champions, the playing national anthems and patriotic songs and speeches by dignitaries.

A special ceremonial first pitch ceremony will include all of the teams and Taylor's own Steve Avery, who went from an all-star pitcher at John F. Kennedy High School to an all-star and playoff most valuable player in the Major Leagues.

Paws, the official mascot of the Detroit Tigers, will mingle with fans.

The night will conclude with fireworks.

The opening day of games is Sunday, starting at noon. Four games will be played each day August 12-16. The top two teams in the International Pool will play at 5 p.m. August 17, followed by the USA championship game at 8 p.m.

The world championship game of Junior League baseball is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, August 18. The game will be televised live on ESPN2.

Tickets on game days are \$5 per carload per day or \$10 for a weeklong pass. Both fees include parking. Heritage Park is located at 12111 Pardee Road between Goddard and Northline roads.

For more information on the Junior League World Series, visit the website www.cityoftaylor.com/worldseries. To sponsor the World Series, call Director Greg Bzura at (734) 306-3113. Also, follow the World Series all week on Facebook at www.facebook.com/juniorleagueworldseries.

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