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Aruba & Arizona say 'bring it' in World Series at Heritage Park

Arizona and Aruba boys say 'bring it' in 2009 Junior League World Series in Taylor; New Mexico, Puerto Rico, Saipan and Indiana win on day one

Champion youth baseball teams from Aruba and Arizona will hit World Series Field for the first time in the Junior League World Series at Taylor's Heritage Park.

Both regional champions may have their hands full with teams that won on Sunday, which was opening day of the tournament for the world's best teams of 13- and 14-year-old baseball players.

Scottsdale, Arizona, will try to add to its 18-game winning streak heading into the series when the all-stars take on Middlebury, Indiana, at 11 a.m. Monday. Indiana, the USA Central Region champs, opened series play Sunday with a 7-2 victory over Eastern champ Jackson, New Jersey. Team Arizona is the best in the West.

In Monday's second game, Aruba will play its first game ever in the Junior League Series when the Latin America champions battle Saipan at 2 p.m. The Asia-Pacific champs spoiled Italy's debut in the series on Sunday night, 13-2.

In all, four games are scheduled on Monday:

Middlebury, Indiana (1-0) vs. Scottsdale, Arizona (0-0), 11 a.m.
 Oranjestad, Aruba (0-0) vs. Saipan, NMI (1-0), 2 p.m.
 Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada (0-1) vs. Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy (0-1), 5 p.m.
 Albuquerque, New Mexico (1-0) vs. Jackson, New Jersey (0-1), 5:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$5 per carload per day or \$10 for the entire week. Both fees include parking.

Heritage Park is located at 21555 Pardee Road between Goddard and Northline.

The Junior League World Series is considered the older brother of the Little League World Series, the annual tournament for 12-year-old ballplayers in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. This is the 29th straight year that Taylor has hosted the Junior League World Series.

Games continue throughout the week. Teams compete in one of two pools: International and USA.

Four games are scheduled for each day, Sunday through Thursday. The International championship game is set for 5 p.m. Friday, followed by the USA championship game at 8 p.m.

The World Series championship game is set for 5 p.m. Saturday. The game will be televised live on ESPNU and on tape delay on ESPN2.

Following are recaps of Sunday's action:

Albuquerque, New Mexico 7 **Easley, South Carolina 6**

After spotting South Carolina six runs in the top of the first inning, the USA Southwest Regional champions from Albuquerque, New Mexico clawed their way back for a 7-6 win in the opening game of the 29th Junior League World Series.

The Southeast champs from Easley, South Carolina, sent 11 batters to the plate in the first, scoring six runs – three on suicide squeeze plays. Getting one run back in the bottom of the first, New Mexico sent 10 batters to the plate in the top of the third to tie the score at six.

With two out in the bottom of the sixth, New Mexico shortstop Andre Vijil homered to put the Southwest champs ahead. Jonah Urritia pitched a one-hit top of the seventh to seal the victory for New Mexico.

New Mexico takes the diamond again at 8 p.m. Monday vs. USA Eastern champion Jackson, New Jersey. South Carolina next plays at 8 p.m. Tuesday vs. Scottsdale, Arizona.

Yabucoa, Puerto Rico 8 **Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada 2**

In Sunday's opening game of the International Pool, the Puerto Rico national champions bettered the Canadian champs from Coquitlam, British Columbia, 8-2.

The team from Yabucoa, PR, started the scoring with a solo home run from pitcher Kristian Brito in the first inning. The team added three more in the fourth, featuring a 350-solo blast off the bat of Brito.

One run in the fifth, two in the sixth and one in the seventh capped the scoring for the winners. Canada scored in the sixth on two bases-loaded walks.

Brito and his Canadian counterpart Jeff Heidema each pitched 5 2/3 innings and threw 10 strikeouts.

Each team's next opponent is Italy. Canada plays the European champions at 5 p.m. Monday; Puerto Rico has the Italian all-stars next at 11 a.m. Tuesday.

Middlebury, Indiana 7 **Jackson, New Jersey 2**

The USA Central Regional champs from Middlebury, Indiana, sprayed 13 hits around the ballpark enroute to a methodical 7-2 victory over the Eastern Region champs from Jackson, New Jersey.

The Indiana all-stars scored one run in the first inning and two in each of the third, fourth and fifth innings.

Indiana got a strong pitching performance from Judah Zickafoose, who scattered four hits in 5 2/3 innings, giving up two runs in the second and belting a bases-loaded double to lead his team's attack. Freeman Fry and Austin Muniot combined to pitch 1 2/3 innings of scoreless ball to preserve the win.

Tyler Pallente started for the New Jersey team from the Holbrook Little League.

Both teams play Monday. Indiana is challenged by Arizona at 11 a.m. New Jersey plays New Mexico at 8 p.m.

**Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands 13,
Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy 2**

In the nightcap, the Asia-Pacific champions from Saipan took on the Friuli Venezia Giulia team from Italy, the champions of the Europe/Middle East/Africa Region. The festivities began with Italy – playing for the first time in Taylor – placing its national flag on the Hill of Champions.

Davide Bertoldi's solo home run off Saipan starting pitcher Brian Camacho gave Italy an early lead. Playing small ball and aggressively running the bases, Saipan scored five runs in the second, two runs in the fifth, three in the sixth and three in the seventh to win easily 13-2.

The Italy all-stars punched in their other run in the bottom half of the fifth. The outstanding defensive plays of the game were turned in by Italy's third sacker Enrico Varin, who leaped high to spear a line drive heading down the third base line and then dove to snare another one.

Saipan returns to action at 2 pm. Monday vs. Aruba. Italy will start Tuesday's action vs. Puerto Rico at 11 a.m.

Tuesday's Schedule

Italy vs. Puerto Rico, 11 a.m.

New Mexico vs. Indiana, 2 p.m.

Canada vs. Aruba, 5 p.m.

Arizona vs. South Carolina, 8 p.m.

For complete information on the World Series, visit www.cityoftaylor.com/worldseries.