

Three USA teams qualify for the World Series in Taylor

Three American teams qualified the same night for the Junior League World Series, which begins this weekend at Taylor's Heritage Park.

- Mechanicsville, Virginia, won the seven-team USA Southeast regional tournament held in Greenville, South Carolina.
- Tyler, Texas, won the eight-team USA Southwest regional tournament held in Midland, Texas.
- El Monte, California, won the 12-team USA West regional tournament held in Laguna Niguel, California.

The three teams will compete in the USA Pool when the World Series for the best teams of 13- and 14-year-old players gets under way Sunday afternoon.

In all, five teams compete in the USA Pool. The last two slots will be filled Thursday night during the conclusion of regional tournaments in Fort Wayne, Indiana (Central), and Freehold Township, New Jersey (East).

Five more teams will compete in the International Pool. Already qualified are teams from Taipei City in Chinese Taipei (Asia-Pacific champions); Guatemala City, Guatemala (Latin America); Kirovograd Center/Rivne, Ukraine (Europe, Middle East, Africa); and the Mexican national champions from Guaymas, Sonora.

The fifth team will be the Canadian national champion, which will be crowned Thursday night in Lethbridge, Alberta.

Opening ceremonies are scheduled for 8 p.m. Saturday at Heritage Park, 12111 Pardee Road. There will be a parade of champions, speeches by dignitaries, a ceremonial first pitch and fireworks. Admission is free and attendance is encouraged to give a warm welcome to visiting players, coaches, umpires and spectators.

Games get under way at noon Sunday. Four games will be played each day Sunday through Thursday. The top two teams after round-robin play will battle Friday, August 20, for the International (5 p.m.) and USA championships (8 p.m.).

The world championship game will take place at 4 p.m. Saturday, August 21. The game will be broadcast live on ESPN2.

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

For updates, visit www.cityoftaylor.com/worldseries.

About the USA Southeast region: The Virginia state champions from Mechanicsville went 5-0 in the Southeast regional, defeating the state champs from Tennessee (10-7), West Virginia (7-5) and Florida (4-1) in round-robin pool play, the state champ from North Carolina (12-0) in a semi-final game and the state champ from Georgia (6-3) for the title. This will be the second team from Mechanicsville in three years to play in Taylor. The Atlee league played here in 2008. This time it's the Mechanicsville league.

About the USA Southwest region: The East Texas state champions from Tyler went 4-0 in the Southwest regional, which has a two-loss knockout format. Tyler bested the state champions of New Mexico (15-3) and Mississippi (13-0) before getting matched with West Texas state champion Waco. A 10-8 Tyler win put Waco in the loser's bracket, but a 5-2 Waco win over Louisiana set up a rematch, which Tyler won, 14-2. This will be the 13th time a team from Texas plays in the Junior League World Series, but the first appearance by Tyler.

About the USA West region: The South California state champion from El Monte went 6-1 in the West regional. The all-stars from the El Monte American Little League defeated the state champion of Nevada handily (11-1), before getting stunned by the state champ of Alaska (4-3). It took wins over the state champs of Idaho (18-5), Utah (10-0) and Hawaii (11-6) to get El Monte into the final four. A 9-2 win over the host team from Aliso Viejo, California, set up the regional championship game vs. the undefeated North California state champion from Rocklin. El Monte romped, 16-3. This will be the 15th time a team from California plays in the Junior League World Series, but the first time for El Monte.

About the USA Central region: The unbeaten Michigan state champions from Midland have qualified to play in Thursday's semi-final games in the 10-team Central region. Others are the state champions of Indiana and Iowa. The fourth slot will be filled after games scheduled for Wednesday. The regional championship game is at 6:30 p.m. Thursday.

About the USA East region: The host team from Freehold Township, New Jersey, is the only unbeaten team heading into Wednesday's games of the 10-team East region. The state champs of Rhode Island, Delaware and New Jersey were also alive. The regional championship game is at 11 a.m. Thursday.

About the Canadian National Tournament: Wednesday's final four of the six-team Canadian region pits Medicine Hat, Alberta, vs. Montreal, Quebec, and Coquitlam, British Columbia, vs. Orleans, Ontario. The national championship game will be played Thursday night.