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And then there were four: World Series will crown International and USA champions on Friday

Southeast champion Tampa, Florida, will challenge the best in the West, Tucson, Arizona, for the United States championship Friday night during the Junior League Baseball World Series at Taylor's Heritage Park, 12111 Pardee Road. Game time is 8 p.m.

At 5 p.m., Asia-Pacific champion Taoyuan, Chinese Taipei, will take on Latin America champion Maracaibo, Venezuela, for the International title.

The winners of the two games will play for the world championship at 11 a.m. Saturday. The World Series finale will be broadcast on ESPN2.

The Junior League World Series features the 10 best teams of 13- and 14-year old players from around the world. The international tournament is the older brother of the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Admission is just \$5 per carload per game, including parking. Heritage Park is located at 12111 Pardee Road, Taylor.

The all-stars from the Palma Ceia/Bayshore League from Tampa, Florida, will return to the USA championship game for the first time since 2004, when they won the Junior League World Series in Taylor.

Tampa (4-0 in the USA Pool) defeated Rosenberg, Texas, 8-5, in a rain-delayed game on Thursday. Florida never trailed and led, 8-1, when Texas scored four runs in the bottom of the seventh. Florida lead-off batter Ronnie Ramirez hit a home run and a double and knocked in four runs. Teammate Jake Bak went 3-for-4. And Cole Gibbs went 2-for-2, hit a solo home run and scored twice. He also pitched 4 2/3 shutout innings to earn the victory. Texas (0-4) got two hits each from Wesley Thompson and Jacob Castro. Jaxon Williams scored twice.

Arizona defeated Central regional champion North Canton, Ohio, 3-0 in the last game of pool play Thursday night to advance to the USA championship game. Tucson scored one run in the first inning and two more in the top of the seventh and then held on as Ohio put runners on first and third in the bottom of the seventh before the game ended on a fly out. In the first, Juan Rodriguez singled, stole second and scored on a base hit by Eduardo Became. In the seventh, Carlos Moreno singled, Rudy Altamarino III doubled was safe on an error, Augie Otero singled home Moreno and Jesus Bracamontes walked with the bases load to make it 3-0. Juan Rodriguez and Daniel Burrola combined on a two-hit shutout.

Venezuela (3-1) secured second place in the International Pool on Wednesday with a 10-0 victory over Canadian national champions from Surrey, British Columbia. Chinese Taipei is 4-0. Canada finished pool play with a 1-3 record.

Venezuela scored seven times in the sixth inning to turn a close game into a rout. The game was called on the mercy rule once Venezuela reached 10 runs in the bottom of the sixth. Kevin Reyes went 3-for-4 and had a three-run home run as part of a 15-hit attack. Oberto Munoz, Michael Bowen and Yohel Pozo also had two-hit games. Pozo and Mikey Edie combined on a two-hit shutout on the mound.

Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, got into the win column with a 9-1 victory over Emilia, Italy. Puerto Rico scored four times in the second and built on the lead with a 10-hit attack. Ruben Castro went 2-for-3, scored a run and knocked in four. Teammates Rey Rodriguez, Yomar Laboy and Argenis Herrera also had two-hit games. Ender DeJesus pitched six shutout innings before Italy scored its lone run in the top of the seventh. Both teams finished 1-3 in the International Pool.

Friday's Schedule

International Championship: Taoyuan, Chinese Taipei vs. Maracaibo, Venezuela, 5 p.m.

USA Championship: Tampa, Florida vs. Tucson, Arizona, 8 p.m.

Saturday's Schedule

Home Run Derby, 9 a.m.

World Championship, 11 a.m. (Broadcast live on ESPN2)

Final Pool Standings

USA Pool

Tampa, Florida 4-0

Tucson, Arizona 3-1

Johnston, Rhode Island 2-2

North Canton, Ohio 1-3

Rosenberg, Texas 0-4

International Pool

Taoyuan, Chinese Taipei 4-0

Maracaibo, Venezuela 3-1

Emilia, Italy 1-3

Surrey, British Columbia, Canada 1-3

Yabucoa, Puerto Rico 1-3

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