

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Events](#) | [Elected Officials](#) | [Departments](#) | [Online Services](#) | [About Taylor](#) | [Contact](#)

It's Florida vs. Aruba in world championship game of Junior League Baseball World Series

TAYLOR, MICHIGAN – An all-star baseball team of 13- and 14-year-old boys from Rockledge, Florida, will take on the Latin America champions from Oranjestad, Aruba, for the Junior League World Series championship. The world title game will get under way at 11 a.m. Saturday at Heritage Park in Taylor, Michigan.

The park is located at 12111 Pardee Road. Admission is \$5 per carload, which includes parking.

Florida (5-0) won the USA championship Friday night, 11-5, over USA Southwest champion Corpus Christi, Texas (3-2).

Earlier in the night, Aruba (4-1) won the International championship by defeating the Mexico national champions (4-1) from San Nicolas de Los Garza, Nuevo Leon, 5-2.

The Junior League World Series started in Taylor in 1981 and has remained in the city ever since. Founder Greg Bzura has been series director since its inception.

The Junior League series is the older brother of the famous Little League World Series for 12-year-olds played in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Rockledge, Florida, and Aruba will attempt to succeed the Palma Ceia/Bayshore team from Tampa, Florida, that won the World Series in 2011. Florida teams have won nine world titles in Taylor.

Aruba has played in just Junior League World Series. In 2009, the Latin American champs finished runner-up to a team from Scottsdale, Arizona. Two members of the current team's coaching staff also coached the 2009 team.

In addition, the members of the team from Oranjestad have World Series experience. The same Aruba North league competed last year as the Caribbean regional champions in the Little League World Series in Williamsport.

The win over Texas was the second during the series for Florida – and neither one of them came easy. In Friday's game, Florida scored six times in the last two innings to break open a game that had been a nail-biter until that point. With the game tied at 5-5 after five, Florida loaded the bases with nobody out on a walk, a single and an error. Trevor Payne singled home Michael Hall with the go-ahead run and then Jackson Parker singled home Brady Martello for a two-run lead. Hall and Studstill scored before the inning was over. Florida put the game further out of reach with two more runs in the seventh. Studstill went 3-for-4, scored twice and knocked in two runs. Parrish, Hall and Gavin Spinneweber had two hits apiece. Parrish and Hall each scored three runs in the game. Studstill came on to pitch midway through the fifth inning and earned the victory. Michael Hellums and Chris Nuncio had two hits apiece for Texas. Teammate Joshua Baltierra scored twice.

In the International title game, Mexico (4-1) scored one run in the top of the first inning when Edwin Villarreal singled home Pedro Tovar. Aruba (4-1) came back with two in the second inning and three in the third to take a 5-1 lead that would last until the top of the sixth inning. In the second, Jirvin Penja tripled home Sharif Arends and then Penja scored on a single by Endry Brito. In the third, Luis Gonzalez singled home Anthony Lacle, Gillian Wernet singled home Edmar Tromp and Jendrick Odubar scored on a bases-loaded walk. In the sixth, Mexico's Victor Guanajuato scored from third on a bases-loaded fielder's choice by Jorge Leo. Aruba outhit Mexico, 10-9, and each team stranded eight runners. Tromp had two hits in the game for Aruba. Pitcher Ryan Oduber went the first 6 1/3 innings, allowing two runs, walking one and striking out two. It was his second victory of the series, with the first coming Tuesday against Chinese Taipei. Losing pitcher Carlos Iruegas had two of Mexico's hits. Aruba's win avenged a 7-5 victory by Mexico over Aruba on Monday in pool play.

The week-long World Series features 10 teams from around the globe. Five teams start the week in the USA Pool. The other five are in the International Pool. That stage of the tournament is played in round-robin format.

All teams arrive in Taylor having won a championship. This year's USA field included the USA West champions from Manhattan Beach, California; the Central champions from North Canton, Ohio; and the East champions from Franklin Square, New York. All three went 1-3 in pool play. The International Pool also included the Asia-Pacific champions from Tainan City, Chinese Taipei (2-2); the Europe/Middle East/Africa region champions from Lazio, Italy (1-3); and the Canadian national champions from Calgary, Alberta (0-4).

Final Pool Standings

USA Pool

Florida 4-0
Texas 3-1
California 1-3
Ohio 1-3
New York 1-3

International Pool

Mexico 4-0
Aruba 3-1
Chinese Taipei 2-2
Italy 1-3
Canada 0-4

To Follow the Games:

•The World Series finale will be broadcast live on ESPN2 at 11 a.m. Saturday.

- Statistics can be found at <http://juniorlbws2012.bbstats.pointstreak.com>.
- The World Series website is www.cityoftaylor.com/worldseries. The site features the complete schedule, results and history of the series.
- The World Series Facebook page, which has about 2,300 fans, is www.facebook.com/juniorleagueworldseries.

From Junior League All-Stars to the Major Leagues

A number of current or past professional baseball players played for teams in the Junior League World Series before making it as stars in the big leagues. They include Gary Sheffield, Eric Bedard, Brett Myers, brothers Jose and Javier Valentin, Erubiel Durazo, Chad Hermansen, Derek Bell, Delino DeShields, Shannon Withem, Adam Loewen and Chris Brock. Sheffield and Bell were teammates on the Belmont Heights junior team from Tampa, Florida, that won the Junior League world championship in 1982. Some future major leaguers may be on the rosters in 2012.

Other future stars to play in Taylor have included Chris Dingman and Steve Reinprecht, Junior League teammates in 1989 with Edmonton, Alberta, who went on to play in the National Hockey League. Matt Cassel (Northridge, California, 1995) is a quarterback for the Kansas City Chiefs. Mark "Bo" Pelini, a member of the 1981 champions from Boardman, Ohio, went on to play safety for Ohio State University's football team and is now head football coach at the University of Nebraska.

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