

Teams play across the USA, Canada to earn spots in the Junior League World Series

Regional tournaments are under way in five cities across the United States and in Alberta, Canada, for the final six spots in the 2012 Junior League Baseball World Series, which is set for August 12-18 at Taylor's Heritage Park.

Four international teams have already qualified to compete for the world championship of the 13- and 14-year-old junior division of Little League: Aruba, Chinese Taipei, Italy and Mexico.

The USA regionals began this past week in:

- Vancouver, Washington. Eleven state champions and a host team are playing to become USA West regional tournament champion. The tourney started Tuesday and concludes Wednesday.
- Albuquerque, New Mexico. Six state champions and a host team began play Friday in the USA Southwest regional tournament. The championship game is scheduled for Tuesday.
- Greenville, South Carolina. Eight state champions started play Friday in the Southeast regional tournament. The title game is scheduled for Thursday.
- Freehold Township, New Jersey. Nine state champions and a host team began play Saturday in the East regional tournament. The regional title game is scheduled for Thursday.
- Fort Wayne, Indiana. Ten state champions – including the state champ of Michigan – and a host team started play Saturday for the Central regional title. The championship game is scheduled for Thursday.

In addition, the Canadian national tournament got under way on Wednesday in Lethbridge, Alberta. Six provincial champions and a host team are in the hunt. The championship game is scheduled for Thursday.

All 10 championship teams will travel to Taylor for the World Series. Opening ceremonies are scheduled for 8 p.m. Saturday, August 11. The festivities include a Parade of Champions, speeches by dignitaries, a special ceremonial first pitch involving all of the teams and fireworks.

Admission to the opening ceremonies is free. The public is welcome.

The opening day of games is Sunday, August 12, starting at noon. Five teams play in the USA Pool; the other five are in the International Pool.

Four games will be played each of the first five days, August 12-16. The top two teams in the International bracket play at 5 p.m. August 17, followed by the USA championship game at 8 p.m.

The International and USA champs play for the World Series title at 11 a.m. August 18. The final game will be broadcast live on ESPN2. The winner will succeed the Palma Ceia/Bayshore Little League team from Tampa, Florida, as world champion.

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.

The Junior League World Series has been played in Taylor since its inception in 1981. The JLWS is the "older brother" of the Little League World Series for 12-year-olds played in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

For more information, visit the website www.cityoftaylor.com/worldseries. To sponsor the World Series, call Director Greg Bzura at (734) 306-3113.