



1908

Japanese immigrants bring baseball to Brazil

100

Organised baseball clubs currently in Brazil

5

Number of leagues for players 12 and under (Little League)

10,000,000

Number of baseball players throughout Central and South America

6

Number of medals won by Brazil in the "AA" World Youth Championships (1 Gold, 3 Silver, and 2 Bronze)

30

Native Brazilians currently playing professional baseball in Japan, Korea and Chinese Taipei

2

Number of times each the Brazilian national baseball team has qualified for the IBAF Baseball World Cup tournament and the International Cup baseball tournament

13

Native Brazilians currently signed with North American Major League Baseball (MLB) teams, the most of any South American country except Venezuela



1868

Baseball is first played in Japan

5

Japanese major league baseball (yakyuu) teams are based in and around Tokyo

30,000,000

fans make baseball Japan's most popular spectator sport

92%

of all viewer hours of Athens 2004 Olympic Games baseball coverage were logged by fans in Asia

15

Number of times Japan has competed in the IBAF Baseball World Cup, placing second in 1982 and never placing below fifth

1996

Japan wins baseball silver medal in the Atlanta Olympic Games

2006

Japan wins the World Baseball Classic, beating Cuba in the final game 10-6

2008

Japan wins IBAF Women's Baseball World Cup



1965

Spain makes first appearance in Little League World Series

16

Spain's world ranking according to IBAF international competition system

14

Number of medals Spain has won in the European Championships – Senior (1 Gold, 1 Silver, and 12 Bronze)

1992

Baseball makes its first appearance as a medal sport at the Barcelona Olympic Games, with the support of baseball fan and IOC President, Juan Antonio Samaranch of Spain

2

Number of times Barcelona's el Picadero Jockey Club and Piratas de Madrid have each won baseball's European Cup

4

Number of IBAF Baseball World Cups in which Spain has competed

29

Years that Spanish League legend Félix Cano has played on the national team

2007

First year of the RFEBS (Real Federación Española de Béisbol y Sófbol) Hall of Fame and Virtual Museum



40,615

Capacity of U.S. Cellular Field

41,118

Capacity of Wrigley Field

5,881,438

Combined 2008 attendance at Chicago Major League Baseball games

100

Current number of Chicago high school baseball teams

75

Current number of Chicago Little League teams

1,100

Number of groups on Facebook dedicated to the Chicago Cubs and Chicago White Sox

1851

First recorded baseball game in Chicago

1910

Baseball's first successful night game under artificial lights

1920

Chicago team owner Andrew "Rube" Foster founds the Negro National League

WHY BASEBALL?

A REPORT ON WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF BASEBALL



Features



Photo by Doug Benc/Getty Images



Photo by Donald Miralle/Getty Images

The 2009 World Baseball Classic will finish in Los Angeles after stops in San Juan, Mexico City, Toronto, Tokyo, San Diego and Miami, and it will have been seen in over 220 countries/territories around the globe. Some of the world's top athletes have been showcased, but the real impact of the event will be felt at all levels of play, as the World Baseball Classic will contribute over US\$15 million to develop the sport for men and women, boys and girls, worldwide. Those monies will help grow the infrastructure of the game in tough economic times and continue to help the IBAF and its member federations find ways to further impart baseball's values of fair play, teamwork, decision making and a healthy lifestyle to all involved.

Baseball Continues to Enhance Olympic Ideals By Going Green



The International Baseball Federation (IBAF) has begun implementing its Green Initiatives for all of its sites for the **2009 Baseball World Cup**, which will be held across Europe from 9-27 September. The initiatives are based upon the International Olympic Committee's "Agenda 21," which outlines opportunities for sports leadership bodies to "integrate sustainable development into their policies." The IBAF's initiatives are designed to raise environmental awareness and ensure that the Baseball World Cup is as eco-friendly as possible.

These steps are the first on a continental-wide scale for the sport and will be emulated at all IBAF-sanctioned championships going forward.



"The IBAF is very conscious of its influential role in society, and the positive messages its events can play in raising the awareness of conservation issues," said IBAF Secretary General **John Ostermeyer**. "We are very pleased that we will be able to do our part to assist in this critical area by putting these issues in place for the World Cup."

Included in the IBAF plan for the Baseball World Cup are: collection points at all venues for recyclable material, public address and public service announcements involving athletes reminding fans about environmental consciousness, a reduction in the amount of official vehicles used at all sites, the use of energy-efficient lighting and field maintenance systems, and a staff of volunteers at each venue to make sure all green initiatives are being carried out. Each venue will also bear a specially-designed logo designating the site a green zone during the event.

The 2009 Baseball World Cup will fall further into line with Olympic movement standards, as the tournament will be Agenda 21-compliant, WADA-compliant and will follow ORIS guidelines for information systems.



"Around the Horn" means to throw the baseball from player to player around the diamond (infield).

Far East Bloomers Take Top Spot at Women's Tournament, Hong Kong International 2009 Phoenix Cup



The **Far East Bloomers**, a contingent of female Japanese players from various teams, won the gold medal for the 2009 Phoenix Cup for the second consecutive year. The North American Liberty Belles came out of Group B as the top seed and defeated the Kapok Flowers from Chinese Taipei 7-0 to reach the championship game, where they clinched the silver.

IBAF Announces Assistance Plan For Barcelona Baseball Club Tragedy

The IBAF announced it will provide new equipment and additional support materials to Spain's Sant Boi baseball club in Barcelona to help replace all that was lost during the club's building collapse in a storm on 24 January. Four children were killed in the collapse, which was caused by heavy winds, and many others were injured. The club building and all its equipment were also destroyed. The IBAF also added that it will honour the memory of those lost and injured in the tragedy when play begins for the 2009 Baseball World Cup on 10 September.

"The IBAF is pleased to help the people of the Sant Boi club in any way possible, and fulfilling their request for new equipment, especially some pitching machines, is the least we can do," said IBAF Secretary General John Ostermeyer. "Baseball has long been a game which brings people of all backgrounds together, and there is no greater time for the baseball family to join together in support than when a tragedy such as this occurs. It is a small gesture, which we hope will assist those at the club heal in some small way."

"Inventor of Tee Ball" Passes Away



Jerry Sacharski, whom many believe to have been the inventor of Tee Ball, passed away on 27 February at age 93. Mr. Sacharski was the first to set up a Tee Ball league in Michigan in 1958 and was part of a game that now has over three million children participating worldwide.

IBAF in the News

Baseball Notes from Around the World

They said it...

International Baseball Federation Teams Up With "Pitch In For Baseball"

The International Baseball Federation (IBAF) and "Pitch In For Baseball" (PIFB) announced in early March a partnership to provide equipment for youth groups around the world. The IBAF has committed to its member federations to provide gently-used baseball equipment when possible, and PIFB provides one of the world's leading equipment donation services. Said PIFB Executive Director David Rhode, "The partnership with IBAF will serve as a catalyst to expand our mission to improve the social, emotional and physical well-being of children through the game of baseball. We are anxious to give more children everywhere access to this great game."

The partnership will begin during the second quarter of 2009, targeting specific foundations in Africa and Europe. The ultimate goal of both organisations is to grow worldwide participation in baseball through the collection and delivery of equipment to young players on every continent.

Mexico's Professional League to Play in the U.S.



For the first time ever, the Mexican Professional League will bring a regular season game to the United States, when the Diablos Rojos of Mexico City and the **Sultanes of Monterrey** meet on 16 May at Dodgers Stadium in Los Angeles. The game will be another prime example of the growth of the sport in the Mexican community and is expected to be a sellout of over 40,000 fans.

Baseball Kenya has developed a project involving almost 1,700 children in impoverished areas of Nairobi to introduce baseball as a way to work together, resolve conflict and learn both life and athletic skills.

With the joint support of funds from the IBAF, Baseball in Fiji announced in March the doubling of their programme to include more boys and girls than ever before.



Baseball Turkey has announced the establishment of 35 baseball teams. Turkey is serving as the host of **European youth championships** in Antalya.

Cambodian Baseball and MLB International have established new baseball programmes for as many as 40,000 school children in Phnom Pen, Cambodia.

The government of Chinese Taipei announced it will promote baseball by providing more incentives to interested companies and public enterprises to invest in the sport and grow the exposure of baseball in Chinese Taipei as a "Sport for all."

One of Australia's top club teams, the Ku-ring-gai Stealers, hosted a fund-raiser to raise US\$10,000 for the victims of the Australian bush fires.

Thirteen young people were awarded scholarships by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) based on their outstanding performance at the State Baseball Championship held at Amar Sing College. The recipients included four female ballplayers.

Baseball in Ghana will bring a team to Los Angeles in June for a baseball clinic and game with the Encino, California, Little League. There are over 6,000 boys and girls in Ghana now playing baseball.

The Atlanta Braves of Major League Baseball announced plans to open an academy for Spanish prospects in Tenerife, Spain, to assist the growth of baseball in the region.

The Netherlands Baseball and Softball Federation was named the most successful sport federation in the country for the first time.



The **Adamson University Falcons** won their 10th Philippine University Baseball title. It's the third time that Adamson won both the baseball and softball titles in one season, having done it in 1997 and 1998.

In February, the San Diego Padres, working with Washington and Lee University, sent a team of college students to the Dominican Republic to teach English to their baseball students. The academy draws potential baseball players between the ages of 16 and 20 from Venezuela, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and other Spanish-speaking nations.

When "Diamond" is used in baseball, it is referring to the field, because the infield is shaped like a diamond.

DIAMOND QUOTES

"The world map of baseball keeps on changing, slowly but steadily, from the age of U.S. dominance to one of rival warlords. Baseball will be excluded from the 2012 Olympic Games in London. However, the development of this globalisation and evolution will contribute considerably to baseball [being] reinstated to the Olympic games."

— *Asahi Shimbun*

"Baseball lore is littered with stories of kids who overcame seemingly insurmountable hurdles – physical, cultural, linguistic – to make it to the majors: the Dominican teens who used milk cartons for gloves or the Cuban youths who used broomsticks for bats."

— *Sports Illustrated*, March 2009

"Yes I am a girl but I'm really dedicated to the game of baseball, which I love playing – nothing gets in my way."

— *Marti Sementelli*, pitcher for the baseball team at Burbank (California) High School

"The essential goal is to find the best position for baseball on the sports ranking in Portugal...We are just starting our development...Investing in the young players [and] in clinics...we can very easily overtake other sports."

— *Sandra Monteiro*, President of the Portuguese Baseball Softball Federation and the first woman president of an IBAF Federation

"The World Baseball Classic testing regimen will be 'more stringent' than MLB's, with testing for 'more stimulants and with more tests overall...'"

— *The New York Times*

"Being asked to be a part of this, to represent your country in this competition, is a great feeling. I can't even tell you how much it means."

— *Jake Peavy*, All-Star pitcher, San Diego Padres

"Baseball gives us the opportunity to promote healthy living, recreation and strong social skills in an environment which is very supportive and fun for the children. They are learning sport, but they are also learning all the life skills that they would not get through other activities."

— *Dedan Kariuki*, Baseball Federation of Kenya

"We are learning this great game and being given an opportunity to maybe be role models for a new wave of baseball players from India. All we want to do is learn the lessons of baseball and get better all the time. It's a great challenge."

— *Rinku Singh*, one of two Indian prospects to sign professional contracts this year with the Pittsburgh Pirates of MLB



On behalf of the International Baseball Federation, its member federations and the millions of men, women and children who love the sport of baseball, we wanted to again thank you for your support, especially in our efforts to return baseball to the Olympic Programme and grow the game globally.

March and April are traditionally the months where many start thinking about playing and watching the game again, and that interest is reflected in the large increases in signups for programmes around the world, from Tee Ball and Little League to adult organisations. Just as compelling is the interest from places where the game is just starting to grow, such as Ghana, Kenya, and Sierra Leone on the African continent and in the republics of the former Soviet Union. The requests for information, equipment and coaching are quite impressive, and we are looking forward to a big year around the world for the sport.

The growth has also been fueled by the interest in the World Baseball Classic, which saw landmark wins by teams from Australia, the Netherlands, Italy and China broadcast around the world in over 220 countries and territories. Those emerging countries can now stand alongside traditional powers like Japan and Korea, Puerto Rico, Cuba and the United States on the world baseball stage, with more exciting play to continue as the professional leagues begin and we look to the Baseball World Cup this September in Europe.

In summation, there has never been a more exciting time for baseball. We have addressed all the issues the IOC put forth for reinstatement, exceeded the numbers for WADA compliance and have enacted green initiatives for all our events. We also have more of the top players in the game now excited about the chance to represent their country on an international stage, and that enthusiasm is carrying over to the stars of tomorrow. We are working as closely as possible with the four bid cities for 2016 to make sure that, whichever wins, we can step in and make their effort a success. Since each city has a history with baseball, the fit should be very seamless and we are all excited about the challenge.

Since new information continues to come in on a daily basis, we would encourage you to visit ibaf.org for all the latest news.

Thanks again for your time and interest. Let's Play Ball.

March 2009

Did You Know?

1. Since 1992, over 300 players who have played in the Major Leagues in North America have participated in Olympic baseball.
2. In 2007, there were 16,971 drug tests conducted by WADA in baseball (including pro leagues), the highest number in the sport's history. Baseball is a leader in finding answers to the issue of doping in sports.
3. The number of new books about baseball published each year is around 600, the most of any sports category worldwide.
4. Baseball is growing quickly as a participatory sport amongst girls globally, so the IBAF will be adding an addendum to their Olympic bid to have a potential women's competition in the future.



Martin Cervenka

On the Professional Side...

There are now over 40 players from seven European nations signed with professional organisations in North America. One of the latest was 17-year-old catcher **Martin Cervenka** from KOTLARKA PRAGUE, who signed a Minor League contract with the Cleveland Indians on 24 January. He is the first European baseball player to sign with Cleveland.

The Swedish National Team will be going to the United States in May for three exhibition games against Northwoods League summer college baseball teams in the midwestern part of the country. Sweden will play clubs in LaCrosse and Madison, Wisconsin, as well as Brainerd, Minnesota, in preparation for the Baseball World Cup in September. Sweden will host Baseball World Cup first-round games in a new ballpark.

The Minnesota Twins have spent a lot of time and effort scouting Australian baseball prospects, and that is evident at the Twins' spring training facility in Fort Myers, Florida. Seven Australians on their home country's 45-man provisional World Baseball Classic roster are in the Twins camp.