

WBSC Awards Hosting Rights of 2021 U-18 Baseball World Cup to USA

The 2021 youth world championship will take place in Sarasota and Bradenton, Florida

SARASOTA-BRADENTON, FLORIDA, USA, March 5, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) today announced it has awarded the hosting rights of the U-18 Baseball World Cup® 2021 to USA Baseball and the cities of Sarasota and Bradenton, Florida. This marks the first time since Cape Cod and Fenway Park hosted the 1995 Junior World Championship that the top youth international baseball event will be held in the United States.

The announcement was made at a joint press conference held at the Powel Crosley Estate in Sarasota-Bradenton, Florida, featuring WBSC President Riccardo Fraccari, USA

Baseball President Mike Gaski, USA Baseball Executive Director/CEO Paul Seiler, Pittsburgh Pirates President Frank Coonelly, Orioles-Sarasota Vice President David Rovine and representatives from Visit Sarasota County and the Bradenton Area Sports Commission.

The 30th edition of the U-18 Baseball World Cup will take place in September 2021 and feature the world's best players from 12 countries in the U-18 category (16 to 18 years old). As the host nation, the USA Baseball 18U National Team—the current four-time defending U-18 world champions—will be granted an automatic berth into the global tournament.

All 50 U-18 World Cup games will be played between Ed Smith Stadium and LECOM Park, the Spring Training homes for Major League Baseball's Baltimore Orioles and Pittsburgh Pirates, respectively.

Team USA is the four-time defending U-18 Baseball World Cup champions (2012, 2013, 2015, 2017) and will look to win an unprecedented fifth consecutive world championship at the 2019 U-18 Baseball World Cup that will be held in Gijang, Republic of Korea, from Friday, August 30 to Sunday, September 8, 2019.

"USA Baseball presented an excellent bid, vision and venue plan for one of youth sport's most prestigious world championships, the U-18 Baseball World Cup," said WBSC President Riccardo Fraccari. "The world's best young players and next generation of superstars will have an iconic stage—the same stadiums where top professionals play and train—to perform and showcase their talents to the passionate fans in the stands and those watching across the world. While the



sport of baseball has never been as global as it is today, there has never been a more opportune time to bring the U-18 Baseball World Cup back to the U.S., where baseball, together with softball, has furthered its position as the most practiced team sport, with

participation numbers increasing over 20% to 25 million over the last five years, in the U.S. alone.”

“USA Baseball is honored to be selected to host the U-18 Baseball World Cup and we aim to provide a truly once-in-a-lifetime baseball experience to the athletes and fans who take part in this premier event,” said USA Baseball President Mike Gaski. “Our national pastime continues to be a major influence in the culture of the United States and we are proud to partner with the cities of Bradenton and Sarasota, Florida, to welcome the international baseball community to the birthplace of baseball.”

Sarasota and Bradenton are located south of Tampa Bay on Florida’s Gulf Coast, a region known for award-winning beaches and a long history of arts and culture. The two cities have jointly hosted numerous international youth and amateur sports competitions including the 2017 World Rowing Championships and the 2017-2018 International Triathlon World Cups.

“Visit Sarasota County and the Orioles are pleased to welcome some of the world’s top baseball players to our region for the 2021 U-18 Baseball World Cup,” said Visit Sarasota County President Virginia Haley. “We look forward to working with USA Baseball and the Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau to produce a memorable, world-class experience for all participants.”

“We are thrilled to have been awarded the bid to host the World Baseball Softball Confederation U-18 Baseball World Cup in September 2021—one of the top youth championships in all of sports,” said Sean Walter, Director of Sports at the Bradenton Area Sports Commission. “Both the Bradenton Area and the Pittsburgh Pirates organization stand ready to provide the ideal setting for the world’s best players, who will go on to become future leaders in the sports industry.”

The successful staging of the 2017 U-18 Baseball World Cup in Thunder Bay, Canada, helped the Thunder Bay International Airport break its all-time monthly passenger record for the month of August, while generating a CAD 6.3 million economic impact on the city, as well as multi- millions in brand exposure for sponsors and commercial partners.

The U-18 Baseball World Cups, along with its continental qualifiers, have consistently featured players who have gone on to become some of the biggest names in the sport, such as Japan's Yu Darvish and Shohei Ohtani; Korea's Shin-soo Choo; Cuba's Yasiel Puig and Aroldis Chapman; and the United States’ Clayton Kershaw, Bryce Harper, Manny Machado and Buster Posey.

For more information on the 2021 U-18 Baseball World Cup, visit SarasotaBradenton2021.com, or follow @SARBRAD2021 on Instagram and Twitter. Ticket information will be available in early 2020.

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