



Home Run News

World Children's Baseball Fair Newsletter

a non-profit organization



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Message from WCBF North America Founding Director, Akiko Agishi

Season's Greetings! The 18th WCBF was held in Puerto Rico, hosted by InterAmerican University of Puerto Rico. Since the inaugural year of 1990, over 4000 participants have learned many invaluable lessons through the baseball clinics, games and special recreational activities provided by WCBF. The WCBF experience is beyond baseball: it is an international friendship camp with

baseball as the vehicle to spread the spirit of goodwill, teamwork, and intercultural understanding to all parts of the globe. This summer, our WCBF co-founder, **Hank Aaron** was able to spend four days with us in Puerto Rico at the 2007 summer event week. His presence stirred up lots of excitement at the Press Conference at San Juan airport, the Opening Ceremony, the Welcome Party and out on the clinic fields where he

visited with all the children, posed for photos, and urged the boys and girls to be sure to exchange addresses and start up pen-pal relationships to keep their friendships going and growing. Japanese baseball pitching great **Choji Murata**, managing director of WCBF Japan, also attended the events and was a great spokesperson.



Akiko Agishi, Hank Aaron & Choji Murata

This trip to Puerto Rico was an opportunity for Mr. Aaron to

renew old friendships. In 1953 (just one year prior to his MLB rookie season with the Milwaukee Braves) he played in winter league baseball with the Criollos de Caguas and helped that team win the Puerto Rico league title. One of the WCBF clinic fields he visited was located just across the street from where he lived during that year. When our WCBF group visited the National Sports Museum in Guaynabo, he had the opportunity to meet up with three of his old teammates: Luis Olmo, Juan Pizzaro, and

(continued on page 4)



2007 WCBF USA Participants

Back row: Henry Stewart (Cooperstown, NY), Jason Nemerovski (San Francisco, CA), Dakota Myer (New York, NY), Brandon Katz (Dallas, TX), Tracy Sheehy (Chp) (E. Bonney Lake, WA), Frank Fries (Chp) (Palisades Park, NJ), Tyler Sanchez (New York, NY), Kay Carter, Sheonna Gonzalez (New York, NY), Jeffrey Lye (Chp) (Raleigh, NC), Abbi Bolduc (Wolfeboro, NH), Akiko Agishi (WCBF NA). Front row: Luke Heiken (Cary, NC), Liam Benzvi (Frisco, TX), Aaron McCall (Branson, MO), Trevor Howard (Cary, NC), Daichi Lee (Fountain Valley, CA), Bradley Ward (Apex, NC), Maggie Hall (Cooperstown, NY), Daniel Pedersen (Cary, NC).



EDITOR'S NOTE

We're delighted to let you know that the host city for the 2008 WCBF Summer event will be Aichi Prefecture, Japan from July 28th to August 5, 2008. Cities include Nagoya, Ichinomiya, Toyota, and Tokai. Please check our website for the formal announcement and updates. If you can help with sponsorship or support, please contact WCBF-N.A. HQ at (323) 969-9410 or by Email at wcbfna@aol.com. - LK

18th Annual World Children's Baseball Fair 2007 in Puerto Rico
July 29 - August 6, 2007

Catch Your Dream!



2007 WCBF PUERTO RICO

COACHES CORNER

- **Steve Sotir**, WCBF 2007 Head Coach - To All: Regardless of where the WCBF is held, the baseball clinics are the highlight of the WCBF event each year. This year's IBAF coaching staff arrived in Puerto Rico with 182 years combined teaching and coaching experience. The IBAF coaches were from Puerto Rico, Canada, Japan and the United States. The 170 children, representing 14 countries, participated in the six days of clinics that taught a variety of baseball skills. Basic fundamentals were taught in a progression format which made teaching and learning productive and fun. At the end of each day, games were played to help reinforce what had been taught and the opportunity to learn the rules and strategy of playing baseball.



Steve Sotir and Larry Bryant IBAF Head Coaches

This year's clinics were held at five different locations. While some may have viewed this as a challenge, each local host made it a positive and smooth transition from site to site. This clinic schedule gave the coaches, chaperones and children the chance to visit other beautiful areas of Puerto Rico.

I would like to thank the following: Mr. Oh, Mr. Aaron & Dr. Agishi for their ongoing involvement and support; the WCBF offices in Japan, Puerto Rico and North America; and Mizuno, Decente and Kenko, the equipment sponsors. My compliments to the children for giving their best effort each day...I tip my hat to the chaperones for their cooperation and patience...and I truly appreciated the never ending enthusiasm of the IBAF coaches. A special thanks to Coach Larry Bryant, my right hand man, whose experience and humor helped make this year's WCBF an event to remember!



2007 WCBF / IBAF Coaches Back: Tom Valcke, Mike Valcke, Larry Bryant, Minoru Shimizu, Hank Hasegawa. Front: Rene Rivera, Steve Sotir (Head Coach), Angel Bonilla, Edgar Perez, Ila Borders.

KIDS CORNER

- **Maggie Hall**, USA 3 (Cooperstown NY) age 11 My experience to go to Puerto Rico was the most amazing thing that has ever happened to me!!! I had some very hard times being homesick during the eight days that we were in Puerto Rico, but with the support from the Chaperones, Assistant Coaches and the kids I was able to adjust and have a fantastic time!!! I never thought that I would get this great opportunity. I would like to thank The Baseball Hall of Fame for supporting my trip to Puerto Rico. Some of my favorite things during the week were going to the Botanical Gardens, going to the water parks, getting to meet kids from around the world, and just getting to play the sport I love and the sport I will always love.



- **Matthew Daichi Lee**, USA 2 (Fountain Valley CA) age 11- I had a great time in WCBF in Puerto Rico. It was a very exciting and fun experience for me because I made so many friends from around the world. The baseball clinic was also very fun and I learned the five points in pitching, sliding and fielding. The opening ceremony was awesome since they played different national anthem from all the different countries and Mr. Hank Aaron and Mr. Choji Murata were there to meet us. I exchanged phone numbers and email addresses with many friends and I already received a mail from Kengo from Japan. Australians were funny since they taught me to say "oye" and I became good friends with Dylan. I also helped my American teammates to speak to the Japanese players since I can speak Japanese too. I also became good friends with Raoul from Cameroon. The Canadians, Daryl and Thomas became my friends too. And my teammates from the U.S. were all nice. I hope one day I can see them again.



CHAPERONE REPORT - Tracy Sheehy, 2007 USA 2 Chaperone:

It's been awhile and I'm still in total shock of what a terrific experience it was being a Chaperone for the 2007 WCBF in Puerto Rico. It has left me nearly speechless. I would never have imagined that even with as much work as was involved that I would have had as much fun as I did. As time goes on I miss the kids more and more each day. Being a part of this event has given me a whole new outlook on reality. Seeing nearly 200 kids from all over the world join together to become close friends, teammates and world ambassadors in just a short period of time is truly amazing. Even the shy and homesick kids at the beginning of the week opened up and really seemed to enjoy themselves. The sad part was seeing all the tears the last two days as everyone started to part ways. But not only do we have just the memories and photos to remind us of this great experience, we now have new friends from all over the world. Oh and I think we even learned a new basic food group: Rice and Beans. And yes, let's not forget that the kids have new baseball skills that they can use while pursuing their dreams of playing in the big leagues someday.



On a personal note: I would like to say Thank You to the entire WCBF staff (the Japanese staff you guys rock-you pulled out some amazing miracles during the week), to all the other chaperones, coaches, the entire host staff from Puerto Rico, and all the behind the scene players for all of their help and support, but most importantly I want to thank all of the kids for making this a truly wonderful experience and to Jason, Aaron, Daichi, Liam and Brandon a special thanks to them for giving me a few more gray hairs. They match the ones my kids give me!

Where are they now?



Sadaharu Oh (WCBF Co-founder) continues managing the Fukuoka Softbank Hawks - looking forward to an exciting 2008 season.



Hank Aaron (WCBF Co-founder) attended WCBF 2007 in Puerto Rico! He had a great time visiting Caguas again - he played there in 1958 before embarking on his MLB career.



Peter Moylan Australia, WCBF 1990) Pitcher for the Atlanta Braves! Had an excellent '07 rookie season.



Chris Snelling (Australia, WCBF 1993) is now w/the Philadelphia Phillies! He finished the '07 season with a combined .246 average.



Frederich Cepeda Cruz (Cuba, WCBF '91) Continues to star in the Cuban leagues for the Sancti Spiritus Gallos as well as the Cuba Natnl team.



Camila Terumi Arik (is this the kid from WCBF 1995 Brazil team?) Currently studying medicine at UNESP in Botucatu, Brazil, participated at the 2007 Pan-Am games in Softball.



Fabio Crociati (is this the kid from the WCBF 1995 Italy team?) Plays guitar for the band, "Sold Out".



Tyler Noye (is this the kid from WCBF 1995 Canada team?) Signed with the Bakersfield Condors pro hockey team!



Markus Gienger (is this the kid from WCBF 1992 Germany team?) Catcher for the Cologne Cardinals and the German Natnl baseball team.

- **Alex Griffiths**, Australia (NSW) age 11 - We left Sydney on Sunday 29 July and over 24 hours later we arrived in San Juan, Puerto Rico. We were delayed because of bad weather at Dallas Fort Worth Airport. It was bucketing down and the team and I waited on the plane on the tarmac for little under two hours. We watched Blades of Glory and started watching another movie but I wasn't paying much attention by then. We were very tired. When we arrived at San Juan airport it was two o'clock Monday morning. From the airport we traveled to our accommodation at the Albergue Olimpico with the fifteen USA kids who arrived at the same time. Within forty five minutes we arrived at the Albergue Olimpico and then slept like rocks until eight thirty later that day. Once awake we dawdled to the mess hall for some breakfast. On the second day all the countries (including Australia) attended an opening ceremony. There we received our gear. This consisted (among other things) of : a batting helmet, glove (a really good one!), bat, pair of shorts and baseball pants, baseball playing shirt, baseball bag (pink), boots, 4 plain white T-shirts (now dirty) and 1 pair of socks.



The clinics taught us fielding, base running, catching and pitching and we would do four clinics a day. At the end of each day we would play a game with our group of 15 split into two. Some days we would play kick ball which was fun. On the second last day we did one clinic and then played games after lunch.

We did the clinics on a number of different fields throughout Puerto Rico. One was Roberto Clemente stadium where the opening ceremony was held. Hank Aaron attended the opening ceremony - this was just before his home run record was equaled by Barry Bonds. I don't have any photos of the clinics yet but hope to get some from Scott. We also went to Paquito Montanel Stadium in Ponce (pronounced Ponsay) and Idelfonso Sola Morales Baseball Park in Caguas. Another field I don't know where it was but on this day we had rice and beans for lunch and tea and for the next two days. We did a little sightseeing around Puerto Rico. Parque de Bombas is the fire station, not the baseball stadium my Mum thought it was.

One night all the kids had to do a small performance for everybody. We did the Aussie harka. We left San Juan on Monday 6 August. We had a long flight back via New York but most of us managed ok. We landed in Sydney on Wednesday morning. I was alright until about eleven o'clock [AM]. I was finally ready to crash at that point. I would like to thank the ABF and Baseball NSW for giving me the opportunity to go to Puerto Rico. I had a great time and met a lot of kids from other countries.



- **Paul Klassen**, Canada, age 10 - I would like to thank you for giving me the chance to go to the WCBF in Puerto Rico. I was proud to represent Canada. I am very thankful that I was able to go on this amazing trip and for the generosity of your organization making this opportunity possible for me. Thank you for all the equipment which you gave me. I am wearing my shirts with pride! Your kindness will never be forgotten.

The trip was even more wonderful than I expected. The plane rides were long but fun. Puerto Rico is an amazing country. It was great to meet many wonderful new people from around the world and make new friends. I enjoyed traveling to all of the different baseball fields. The WCBF coaches are awesome! My baseball skills really improved! I was able to meet legend Hank Aaron. I saw many beautiful places, an ocean, and even fed fish! I am proud that I had this once in a lifetime opportunity. Thank you.

- **David Vohanka**, Czech Republic (Prague) age 11 - I will never forget the WCBF, the wonderful week in Puerto Rico including the Puerto Rican food, the whole staff and all the people making everything possible. It was a lot of fun and wonderful experience and I found there also a lot of new friends from the whole world. Thank you very much for everything and may we meet us again on the baseball field somewhere in the world or at the "Olympics".



- **Shogo Kato**, Japan 4 (Kyoto), age 10 - (translation) At the place I stayed, I met kids from Puerto Rico [and other countries] for the first time.

I gave them my name card and also ninja stars and cranes that I brought as souvenirs from Japan. At the day of practice, they waived at me and helped me look for my bat when I was looking for it. That night, we had a pillow fight. I still remember how I got to make such good friends. The 10 days in Puerto Rico were great!!!



Shane Benson
(Australia WCBF 1997) Signed by the Toronto Blue Jays. Playing for the Auburn Double-days (Class A). And a fisherman!



Young Min Ko
(is this the kid from WCBF 1995 Rep of Korea team?) hit the first home run vs Japan in the 1st inning of their 24th Asian Baseball Championships game Dec 2, 2007.



Christoph Beyeler
(is this the kid from WCBF '95 team?) Pitcher for the Bern



Ian Broeske
(USA, WCBF 1995?) Grad of Embry Riddle Aeronautical University-Prescott, Arizona, is now a pilot.



Kwan-Chih Lu
(is this the kid from WCBF 1996 Chinese Taipei team?) She's a Professional Golfer, and plans to start competing abroad.



Daniel Thomson
(is this the kid from the WCBF 1994 Australia team?) Senior at (Southern Illinois Univ Edwardsville) Also played rugby for Brisbane State HS



Benito Guerra Latapi (is this the kid from WCBF 1994 group from Mexico?) Current Mexico Rally driver Champ.



Davi Costa Soares
(is this the kid from WCBF 1996 Brazil team?) He's a fashion model.



Jerrod Pretorius
(is this the kid from WCBF '96 S.Africa team?) Pitched for Northampton Baseball Club UK for 2006 season and has "already become a legend!"



Sad news to report: On October 22nd, 2007 IBAF coach **Rene Rivera** was tragically killed in a work accident. He worked as a lineman for the power company. Rene was a wonderful IBAF coach and a generous host to all of us visiting Puerto Rico for the WCBF event. Our sincere condolences to his wife, children, family and friends. His joy and love of life was an

inspiration to us all. We have lost a dear friend.



Hank Aaron with kids at WCBF 2007

2007 WCBF Puerto Rico IBAF Coaches List

- Steve Sotir, Head Coach, USA
- Larry Bryant, Sub Head Coach, USA
- Angel Bonilla, USA
- Ila Borders, USA
- Hitoshi Hasegawa, Japan
- Edgar Perez, Puerto Rico
- Rene Rivera, Puerto Rico
- Minoru Shimizu, Japan
- Mike Valcke, Canada
- Tom Valcke, Canada



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<www.wcbf.org>

(continued from page 1) Roberto Vargas. Seeing their camaraderie and listening to them reminiscence, it was obvious that being baseball teammates creates deep and lasting bonds.

Later, while we were all enjoying a tour of this fine museum, Mr. Aaron was introduced to Emilio Navarro who, at 101 years, is the oldest living former professional baseball player. His spunk and spirit were obvious in his banter with Mr. Aaron and when he easily bent over to show us how he could still touch his toes! It was a touching and impressive moment and an interesting role reversal when he gave Mr. Aaron an autographed baseball.

This year we also enjoyed the pleasure of Mrs. Aaron's company at camp. For her, as for most of the campers, it was a first time trip to this beautiful island where the people are just as warm as the weather; the food is delicious; the music and dancing are contagious; and those sweet-singing little birds in trees at night are frogs! Gracias Puerto Rico! (contributed by Kay Carter, WCBF N America)



The World Children's Baseball Fair: WCBF, a non-profit organization, was established in 1989 by World Home Run Kings Sadaharu Oh and Hand Aaron along with Dr. Akiko Agishi, founders of the WCBF. The Goal is to share a dream with children from the world through an international baseball fair that would sow the seeds of friendship & teamwork.

- WCBF Event Weeks have been held in the following cities:
- 1990: Los Angeles, California USA
 - 1991: Chiba City, JAPAN
 - 1992: Mito City, JAPAN
 - 1993: San Diego, California USA
 - 1994: Miyazaki, JAPAN
 - 1995: Gifu, JAPAN
 - 1996: Morioka, JAPAN
 - 1997: Nagasaki, JAPAN
 - 1998: Shizuoka, JAPAN
 - 1999: Yokohama, JAPAN
 - 2000: Regina, Saskatchewan, CANADA
 - 2001: Kanazawa City, Ishikawa Prefecture, JAPAN
 - 2002: Tanabe, Wakayama Prefecture, JAPAN
 - 2003: Yamaguchi and other cities, Yamaguchi Prefecture, JAPAN
 - 2004: Awaji Island, Hyogo Prefecture, JAPAN
 - 2005: Maebashi and other cities, Gunma Prefecture, JAPAN
 - 2006: Sapporo, Hokkaido Prefecture, JAPAN
 - 2007: PUERTO RICO - Albergue Olimpico, Carolina, Caguas; Guaynabo; Ponce
 - 2008: Nagoya and other cities, Aichi Prefecture, JAPAN!

THANK YOU

WCBF gives a heartfelt THANKS to all our generous donors & supporters

Hank Aaron, Akiko Agishi, Creative Enterprise Intl. Inc., Major League Baseball, Sadaharu Oh, WCBF Japan, Mario & Karen Ontiveros, Dr. Harvey Schiller (IBAF President), Shimokochi / Reeves, Richard Yamauchi, American Airlines, Kintetsu International, National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown NY, National Geographic for Kids, Harlem RBI, Sary Benzvi, David Bolduc, Jeffrey Heiken, Barry Mitsch, Morrisville Electric, Howard & Jacqueline Nemerovski, Craig & Jane Pedersen, Matthew Silverman, Kelley & Jeffrey Ward

WCBF 2007 Program Schedule:

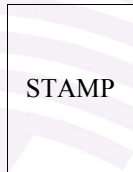
- 7/29 Participants arrive. Registration & orientation.
- 7/30 Distribution of equipment & uniforms. Water Park (Albergue Olimpico). Briefing by IBAF Coaches.
- 7/31 Baseball Clinic #1 (Albergue Olimpico Baseball Park). Water Park (Albergue). Welcome Party.
- 8/1 Opening Ceremony & photo session (Roberto Clemente Memorial Park in Carolina). Baseball Clinic #2.
- 8/2 Baseball Clinic #3. (Idelfonso Sola Morales Baseball Park in Caguas). Visit Caguas Botanical Garden.
- 8/3 Baseball Clinic #4 (Guaynabo Baseball Stadium in Guaynabo). Visit Puerto Rico Sports Museum.
- 8/4 Baseball Clinic #5. (Francisco "Paquito" Montanel Stadium in Ponce). Visit Firehouse, Ponce History Museum, Ponce Boardwalk Park. Goodwill Party at Juan Pachin Vicens Auditorium
- 8/5 Baseball Clinic #6 (Albergue Olimpico Baseball Park). Closing Ceremony. VIP Banquet at the Center of Fine Arts in Caguas.
- 8/6 Participants depart for home.

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