



Home Run News

World Children's Baseball Fair Newsletter

a non-profit organization



Message from WCBF North America Founding Director, Akiko Agishi

Happy 2010 to all of you! As many of you know, for the first time in 20 years, WCBF was unable to hold a Summer Event week in Europe or Japan in 2009 due to financial difficulties. However, WCBF Friendship Games were held in Tokyo and this three day event included international teams from five countries representing five continents: Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Germany, Taiwan, along with 10 teams from Japan. It was not the same kind of event, as there were no baseball clinics, but the tournament was lots of fun and all the participating teams did very well. I personally enjoyed watching Cameroon very much; they played wonderfully. The team from Germany wore very stylish uniforms - bright red and black. Justine Siegal put together a fine team of girls from

Canada (along with a few from the USA, I think). they were all very cute and they played quite well.

I'm now looking forward to celebrating the WCBF 20th Anniversary Summer Event in Tokyo from July 29 to Aug 6th, 2010. I can't believe we've reached this special milestone! It's been such a long time since our first event of 1990 which was held in Los Angeles at UCLA and the Jackie Robinson Stadium. The kids who participated that inaugural year are now about 30 years old and many have kids of their own. It's hard to imagine!

As you all must be aware, baseball will not be included in the Olympics in 2012 or 2016 but I'm still hoping that this wonderful game of baseball will return to the Olympic Games in the future. Meanwhile, we're sure baseball will continue to grow as one of the prominent and popular sports in the world. I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the special leadership of Mr. Sadaharu Oh and Mr. Hank Aaron, and to all the WCBF Japan staff as well as to the great IBAF Coaches. And of course, we must not

forget the assistant coaches, our volunteers, hosts, chaperones, and participants. Without all of you and your terrific support, there would not have been any WCBF events!

Looking back over our 20 years, I can see that each year gave us very special and unforgettable memories. We've lost some dear friends - Joe Dimaggio, Coach Rene Rivera, Coach Rod Dedeaux and others. But we've also had former participants who have exceeded our dreams by going on to play baseball in the Olympics and the World Baseball Classic (WBC). We hope that all our 4300+ WCBF alumni have had success in their varied endeavors and that their outlook on the world has been positively influenced by their WCBF experiences.

I'm looking forward to the future with the hope that this extraordinary program will continue for many more years to come, providing tools and encouragement for children to grow and become citizens of world and building international bridges that connect and unite us all through our common love of baseball. It seems so simple... Akiko

WCBF News briefs

Sadaharu Oh (WCBF Founder) Taiwan President

Ma Ying-Jeou honored Sadaharu Oh with the "Order of Brilliant Star" on Feb. 5th in Taipei. Oh called receiving the award, "The highest honor of his life." In March, Mr. Oh was in Los Angeles as *Special Adviser to the Commissioner of the Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB)* for the 2009 World Baseball Classic and was thrilled to see Japan take the title for the second tournament in a row.



Hank Aaron (WCBF cofounder) On Feb. 5, Mr. Aaron celebrated his 75th birthday with a wonderful gala benefiting his *Chasing A Dream* foundation, which helps underprivileged youths pursue their talents. Former President Bill Clinton, baseball commissioner Bud Selig, & 700 guests celebrated a landmark birthday for the man who hit 755 homers during his Hall of Fame career. Happy Birthday Hank!!

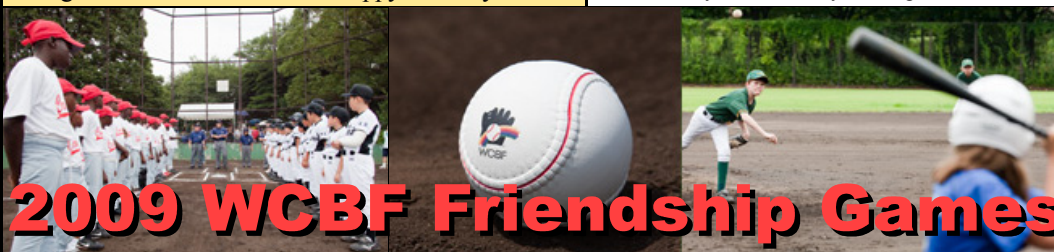


WCBF 2009 Friendship Games teams: (6 countries/regions total) : Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Germany, Taiwan, and 10 teams from Japan.

EDITOR'S NOTE WCBF will be holding the 20th Anniversary WCBF Summer Event in Tokyo Japan July 29th to Aug 6th, 2010! Details will be released as soon as possible. Please check our website for further updates. If you can help with sponsorship or support, please contact WCBF NA at 323-969-9410 or by email at wcbfna@aol.com. - LK



Canada Team: Robin Wallace (Manager), Patrick McCauley & John Kovach (Coaches) and players: Katherine Bilan, Karlyn Ursu, Courtney LaPointe, Emily Nagel, Rachel Sherven, Michaela Carper, Jillian Silvanic, Jasmine Siegal, Katrina Surdyka, Taylor Grasby, and Courtney de Burgh-Thomas



2009 WCBF Friendship Games



COACHES CORNER

My involvement in the WCBF has been nothing short of extraordinary. Since my initial involvement in 1994, I have seen 10-11 year olds grow up to do amazing things: silver medalists in the 2004 Athens Olympics, All-Star players in professional baseball, and new coaches of national teams. But what impresses me the most about the WCBF is it's ability to use the game of baseball as a vehicle for facilitating interaction among boys and girls comprising all the various social boundaries that too often separate us as humans: race, nationality, language, religion, class, culture, and gender. When our focus is on learning and being teammates, those other differences become things to celebrate instead of things to fear. There is so much for the adults of the world to learn from the world's children. - Darin Van Tassell (IBAF Coach)

Coach Darin at WCBF 1994 in Miyazaki, Japan

Van Tassell family in 2009



WCBF 2009 Program Schedule:

- 7/26 Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Germany, Taiwan teams arrive for the WCBF Friendship Games. Distribution of baseball equipment.
- 7/27 Baseball Practice at Oi Wharf Central Beach Park Baseball Fields. Visit Kansai Seaside Park and Aquarium.
- 7/28 Practice Match at Oi Wharf Central Beach Park Baseball Fields. Welcome Party at The Prince Hotel Shinagawa.
- 7/29 Photo Session. Opening Ceremony at Ota Stadium. **Friendship Games Day #1** at Ota Stadium and other baseball fields. Visit Japan Airlines Jumbo Jet Hanger. Watch a professional baseball game at Tokyo Dome.
- 7/30 **Friendship Games Day #2** at Ota Stadium and other baseball fields. Visit Metropolitan Governor Building. Visit NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corp) Studio.
- 7/31 Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Germany, Taiwan teams depart for home.

The WCBF Friendship Games were so much fun! It was a thrill to bring an all girls team to Japan. The Shooting Stars loved playing the Japanese girls' team in the stadium. Our team also befriended the Cameroon team. On the last night we collected equipment for the Cameroon coaches to take back home with them to help develop baseball in their country. For our girls it was a lesson in humility and gratitude. The team enjoyed going to the Giants game, experiencing Japanese culture, and making new friends. They learned that the world is much smaller than they ever thought. - Justine Siegal, Shooting Stars Coach

Thank you so much for the opportunity to participate at the 2009 WCBF. It was a wonderful experience for me but most importantly for the kids. It was heartwarming to see the girls competing on an equal playing field with the boys and to also see that other teams had girl players as well. Moreover, it was amazing to see baseball used as a medium of cultural exchange! I know this is something the players will never forget and hopefully will impact their lives! - Robin Wallace, Manager, Canada team

KIDS CORNER

I went to the WCBF as a player for the Shooting Stars. I found out that I like coaching first base. Going to the Giants game was so cool. I made friends with the Cameroon team and I donated some of my own equipment to their team to take home to their country. I thought it was really cool to play the Japanese girls' team. It was interesting to see how girls from our country interacted with girls from their country who have the same passion for baseball. - Jasmine Siegal, age 11



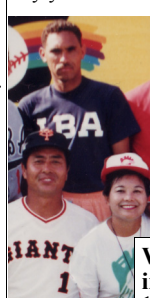
DIAMOND CLUB
Membership Application & Renewal:
www.wcbf.org

(Editor's note: Several participants arrived in Japan with illness & had to be quarantined for the entire event.)

Thank you for giving Seth the amazing opportunity to be part of the team & his first trip to Japan. Despite the fact that the trip did not go as planned, he still brought home lots of good memories and dreams to travel more with baseball. I was only able to attend one of the games (Australia vs Giants). Despite Australia being soundly beaten, it was a great game to watch. The children were having a fabulous time and there were smiles all round. - Wendy Cooper, parent of participant Seth Cooper, Australia

To Mr. Sadaharu Oh: We extend to you our warmest congratulations and deep gratitude for the wonderful hospitality extended to the Cameroon delegation. Let us take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to ideals of WCBF for the building of bridges between various countries and the fostering of world peace through sport and cultural activities. Without your love and dedication to baseball, this great programme would not have been possible. - Sone Winslow, President, Cameroon Baseball & Softball Association

My fairytale began in 1990 when I was invited to be a coach at the inaugural WCBF held at UCLA. It was there that I got to meet & interact with many of my childhood heroes for the 1st time: Joe Dimaggio, Henry Aaron, Harmon Killebrew, Ernie Banks, Lou Brock, and, Mr. Sadaharu Oh, whose career I had followed from afar. I felt like I was living my own fairytale, being around these giants of the game. Participating in the WCBF is very special to me because of whom & what it is about – the children of the world. As a parent and a coach, I believe that we experience more joy and goodwill during WCBF week than we do at any other time during the rest of the year! Watching the participants together daily, with their constant smiles, their playfulness and their sheer enjoyment of life, brings a feeling of joy and hope for us as a society and the world as a whole. With baseball as the guiding vehicle, there appears to be no barriers at WCBF week. Not money, language, race, color, nor culture stands in the way of learning. The founders of WCBF - Mr. Oh, Mr. Aaron, and Dr. Akiko Agishi - definitely got it right when they choose baseball as its bridge to unity. My most memorable moment of my years at the WCBF has to be at the very first event,



1990 WCBF Los Angeles, when I was asked to throw batting practice to Mr. Oh inside the cage at Jackie Robinson Stadium, UCLA. Later that day Mr. Oh handed me the Jersey he wore during the batting practice. I still keep that shirt as my most precious memorabilia of my years at the WCBF. - Angel Bonilla (IBAF Coach)

Angel with Mr. Oh and Akiko at WCBF 1991

WCBF Events have been held in the following locations:

- 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, Sask, CANADA
- 2001: Kanazawa, Ishikawa JAPAN
- 2002: Tanabe, Wakayama JAPAN
- 2003: Yamaguchi, JAPAN
- 2004: Awaji Island, Hyogo JAPAN
- 2005: Maebashi, Gunma, JAPAN
- 2006: Sapporo , Hokkaido, JAPAN
- 2007: Puerto Rico
- 2008: Nagoya, Aichi, JAPAN
- 2009: WCBF Friendship Games in Tokyo, Japan**
- 2010: WCBF 20th Anniversary Summer Event in Tokyo JAPAN**

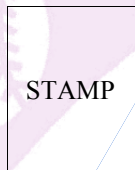
The World Children's Baseball Fair: WCBF, a non-profit org, was founded in 1989 by World Home Run Kings Sadaharu Oh and Hank Aaron along with Dr. Akiko Agishi. Our mission: To share the dream of friendship and teamwork with the children of the world and to sow the seeds of that dream through our international baseball fair.

THANK YOU

WCBF gives a heartfelt THANKS to all our generous donors & supporters:
Hank Aaron; Akiko Agishi;
Creative Enterprise International, Inc.;
Major League Baseball; Sadaharu Oh;
WCBF Japan; Shimokochi/Reeves; Richard Yamauchi; Justine Siegal



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