

ballpark

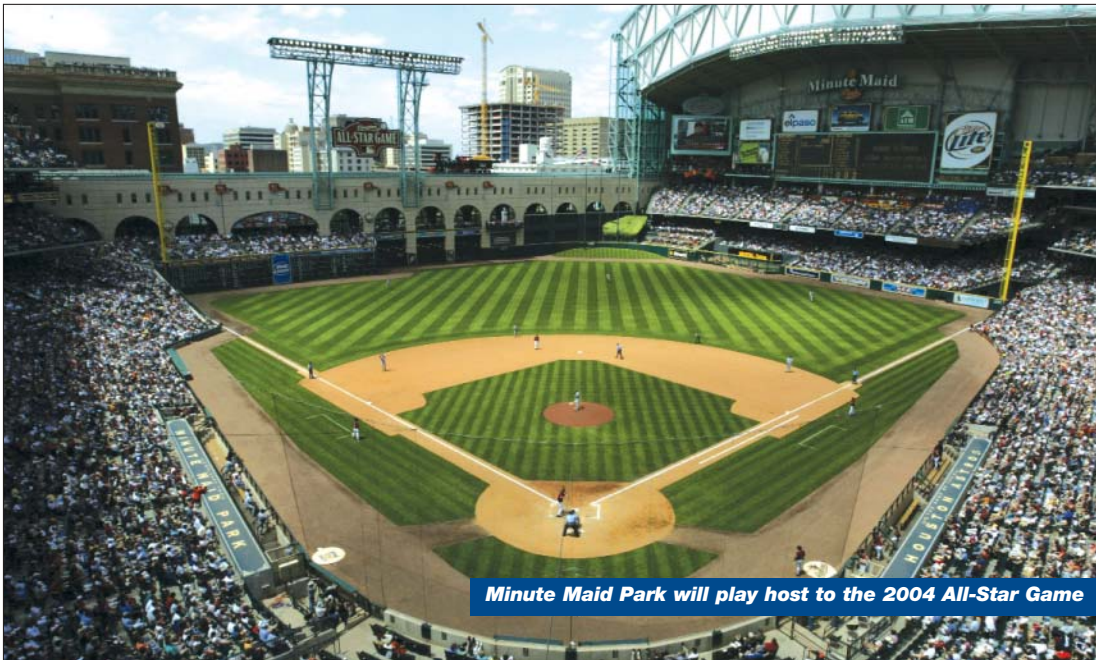


MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL™

THE OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL ★ ALL-STAR PREVIEW ISSUE 2004

Baseball's Brightest Stars to Shine in Houston for 75th Midsummer Classic

RICH PILLING/MLB PHOTOS



Major League Baseball superstars will be on display when the **National League** hosts the **American League** in the 75th **All-Star Game** at **Minute Maid Park**, home of the **Houston Astros**, on July 13, 2004.

For the second consecutive season, the outcome of the All-Star Game will have implications for the 2004 postseason, as the League that wins the **Midsummer Classic** will receive home field advantage in the 2004 **World Series**. Last season's All-Star Game, a thrilling 7-6 come-from-behind victory for the American League, was the first to determine home field in the World Series.

Now more than ever, the Major League Baseball All-Star Game is a celebration of baseball's best

from around the globe. Thirty percent of the Major League players featured on this year's All-Star ballot, including stars like Ichiro Suzuki and Sammy Sosa, were born outside of the United States. At last season's All-Star Game in Chicago, 21 of the 64 All-Stars were foreign-born players, nine of whom were selected to the starting lineup by the fans. The all-time All-Star Game roster is now complete with over 150 different foreign-born players from 17 countries around the world (see page 2 for list).

The Astros previously hosted the All-Star Game in 1968 and 1986, but this will be their first at the beautiful new **Minute Maid Park**, which opened in 2000. In the 1986 contest

at **The Astrodome**, the American League defeated the National League 3-2 behind the game's M.V.P. and then **Boston Red Sox** ace, Roger Clemens. Clemens, who has gone on to have one of the most prolific pitching careers in baseball history is now in his 21st season and pitching in the National League for the first time as a member of his hometown Houston Astros.

The Rocket, as he is known, is in the midst of another great season and is expected to be among the stars in mid-July.

The Major League Baseball All-Star Game is the most popular and most watched All-Star Game in sports. Over 100 million fans around the world will watch or listen to the All-Star events via television, radio and the internet. Additionally,

over 2,000 members of the media from outlets worldwide will be on hand to cover all the action from **Minute Maid Park**.

More than 250,000 people will experience **All-Star Week** in downtown Houston from July 9-13. Along with the big game, All-Star Week brings a variety of events to Houston. The **John Hancock All-Star FanFest**, **New York Mercantile Exchange Futures Game**, **Taco Bell All-Star Legends and Celebrity Softball Game** and **Gatorade All-Star Workout Day**, which includes the **Century 21 Home Run Derby**, are all a big part of this action-packed week (see inside).



MLB Awarded Top Honors by Licensing Industry Merchandisers Association

The Major League Baseball licensing program in Japan was named "Best Sports/Special Events Brand License of the Year 2003" at the 20th Annual LIMA International Licensing Excellence Awards presentation held on June 9. The award recognizes Major League Baseball as the most successful and largest selling sports brand in Japan. Hosted at the Sheraton Hotel in New York City, the awards dinner is held in conjunction with the Licensing International Show. Members of LIMA, the worldwide trade association for the licensing industry, vote for outstanding



properties deserving of Awards for Excellence. Nominations are solicited from the entire licensing industry based on a list of categories and criteria that ultimately determine the industry's tribute to its leaders in creativity and achievement. Miki Yamamoto of IMG Tokyo and H. Richard Isaacson of IMG New York attended the ceremony. Ms. Yamamoto accepted the award on behalf of Major League Baseball and licensing partner in Japan, IMG Tokyo.

American League Eastern Division

Player Nationalities



New York Yankees

Canada, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Japan, Panama, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, USA



Boston Red Sox

Dominican Republic, Panama, Puerto Rico, USA



Tampa Bay Devil Rays

Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, USA



Toronto Blue Jays

Dominican Republic, Japan, USA



Baltimore Orioles

Aruba, Canada, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, USA

Countries That Have Produced Major League All-Stars

Australia
Canada
Colombia
Cuba
Curacao
Dominican Republic
France
Holland
Jamaica
Japan
Korea
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Puerto Rico
Scotland
Venezuela
United States

MLB At The All-Star Game

John Hancock All-Star FanFest

John Hancock All-Star FanFest is the largest baseball fan event in the nation and is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for families and fans of all ages. Now in its 14th year, John Hancock All-Star FanFest captures the thrills and excitement of baseball with nearly 50 interactive exhibits and attractions, Major League clinics and seminars, free autograph sessions, live entertainment, memorabilia and much more. In 2004, John Hancock All-Star FanFest will run from Friday, July 9 through Tuesday, July 13 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas.



Taco Bell® All-Star Legends and Celebrity Softball Game

The Taco Bell® All-Star Legends and Celebrity Softball Game will take place on Sunday, July 11 at Minute Maid Park. This event features stars from film, music and television teaming up with former Major Leaguers for a fun-filled and fan-friendly game of softball. Among the celebrities will be actor Bernie Mac, Apprentice winner Bill Rancic and singer Nick Lachey, while baseball legends such as Ernie Banks, Ozzie Smith and Dave Winfield will participate.

TACO BELL®



Gatorade All-Star Workout Day and Century 21 Home Run Derby

Gatorade All-Star Workout Day provides fans the first opportunity to see the All-Stars take batting practice. The marquee event of Gatorade All-Star Workout Day is the Century 21 Home Run Derby, which features some of baseball's greatest sluggers aiming for the fences. Fans have enjoyed remarkable performances in this event in recent years, including those by Anaheim's Garret Anderson, St. Louis' Albert Pujols and Jason Giambi of the New York Yankees in last year's Derby.



New York Mercantile Exchange All-Star Futures Game

The sixth annual New York Mercantile Exchange All-Star Futures Game will take place on Sunday, July 11 at Minute Maid Park. Featuring the top prospects from the Minor Leagues in a "USA vs. the World" format, this game highlights the globalization of baseball and gives fans a chance to see many of the young players who might soon be making their marks in the Major Leagues. Some of the alumni from the New York Mercantile Exchange All-Star Futures Game include 2003 World Series Most Valuable Player Josh Beckett, 2003 American League Rookie of the Year Angel Berroa and 2002 American League Cy Young Award winner Barry Zito, among many others. Entering the 2004 contest, the U.S. leads the all-time series, 3-2.



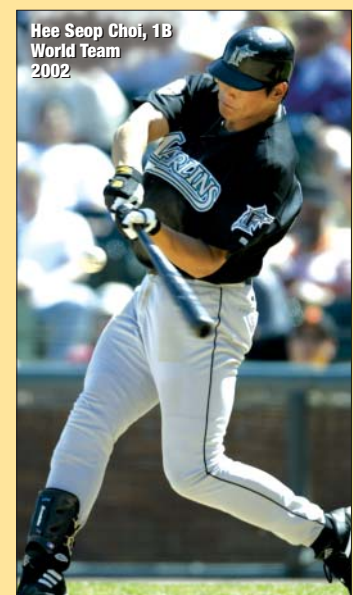
Tomokazu Ohka, P
World Team
1999, 2000



Josh Beckett, P
US Team
2000



Angel Berroa, INF
World Team
2000, 2001



Hee Seop Choi, 1B
World Team
2002

MLB PHOTOS (4)

American League Western Division



Player Nationalities

Texas Rangers

Dominican Republic, Korea, USA



Oakland Athletics

Canada, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Venezuela, USA



Anaheim Angels

Dominican Republic, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, USA



Seattle Mariners

Australia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Japan, Puerto Rico, USA

27% of Major Leaguers, 48% of Minor Leaguers Born Outside of U.S.

This season, Opening Day rosters for the 30 Major League Baseball Clubs included 227 players born outside of the 50 United States. The total represents over 27% of all Major Leaguers and covers 13 different countries and Puerto Rico. The Dominican Republic led all countries with 79 players, while Venezuela was second with 45 and Puerto Rico was third with 36. The **Los Angeles Dodgers** led all Clubs with 14 foreign-born players on their 25-Man Opening Day roster, while the **New York Yankees** had the second-most with 13 and the **Baltimore Orioles**, **Minnesota Twins** and **Montreal Expos** each had 11 players. Additionally, nearly 48% of all minor league baseball players were born outside the U.S. This percentage includes over 2,900 players from 33 countries around the world.



MLB Sponsorship

Asia

Enter to Win at The MLB Store

Beginning June 19, 2004 customers purchasing MLB product at *The MLB Store* and *Major League Baseball Japan Shops* had the opportunity to enter *JSV's* 2004 MLB All-Star Campaign. The campaign was organized by *Japan Sports Vision* and supported in their 20 stores with point-of-purchase including posters, entry boxes and entry forms. Prizes will be awarded to those consumers guessing the correct winning team, **American League** or **National League**, of the 75th All-Star Game. One grand-prize winner from every store location will receive a MLB Fun Bag worth approximately 20,000 yen; an additional 200 winners will get official All-Star Game baseballs by *Rawlings* and All-Star logo pins. *JSV* has continuously supported MLB's jewel events with in-store promotions to service the Major League Baseball fan in Japan. The promotions typically achieve increased sales, particularly of authentic and event-logo merchandise, during the traditionally slow summer retail months.



Take a Quiz, Win a Trip to Houston

Sports Authority Japan is promoting the All-Star Game within their 55 stores throughout Japan with a sweepstakes to send winners to the Midsummer Classic in Houston, Texas. The two lucky winners, Yukino Etoh and Miki Kurita, both women from Aichi Prefecture, and their guests will fly to Houston and attend the **John Hancock All-Star Fanfest**, **Century 21 Home Run Derby**, and 75th All-Star Game. Other prizes include authentic **National League** and **American League** All-Star batting practice jerseys, All-Star logo t-shirts and All-Star caps. Customers purchasing over 3,000 yen worth of MLB product at the stores will also receive a free MLB shopping bag and all customers receive an All-Star logo sticker while supplies last.

Sports Authority All-Star promotions have become well-established, as this is their fourth year running comprehensive in-store campaigns with signage and direct mail flyers. "By coincidence, the total number of *Sports Authority* stores in Japan is 55, which is Hideki Matsui's jersey number. We used this as our campaign quiz answer," said Shigeto Sugiyama of *Sports Authority*. "The winners of the campaign at first couldn't believe that they had won and are thrilled about going to the All-Star Game."

Australia

Sizzler Renews Sponsorship for 7th Year

Sizzler, the family restaurant, has renewed its sponsorship of the school-based skills competition **Pitch, Hit & Run** for a 7th year. Pitch, Hit & Run is now associated with the Australian Sports Commission's Play Ball initiative, which was built to convert skills introduction into player registration. The 2004 goal for Play Ball is to sign up at least 16,000 new players to youth teams from the large pool of kids reached by the Pitch Hit & Run program.

Sizzler has been instrumental in the ongoing implementation of Pitch Hit & Run, which over the years has introduced the basic skills of baseball and softball to over one million Australian school kids. *Sizzler* has assisted with the production of a coach's manual for the program, while equipment partners *Wilson*, *Rawlings* and *Franklin* have supplied many tees, bases, balls, gloves, bats and gear bags.



Qantas Airways Partnership Grows with Opening of Brisbane-to-Los Angeles Non-stop Route

Passengers boarding at the Brisbane International Airport for *Qantas'* inaugural Brisbane-to-Los Angeles, non-stop run were greeted by the **Major League Baseball Roadshow** at the departures terminal. Everyone boarding the flight received a souvenir *Rawlings* baseball emblazoned with *Qantas* and MLB logos, and the message "Now non-stop Brisbane-to-L.A. Catch it!" and "Inaugural Flight 16 June 2004."

Chilli Davis, a veteran of 19 Major League seasons and three time **World Series** champion with the **New York Yankees** (2) and **Minnesota Twins** (1), was on hand to present a souvenir ball to State Manager of *Qantas* Terry Simpson and Queensland Minister of Tourism Margaret Kelly. Davis, who signed souvenir balls for many of the passengers, is in Queensland serving as head batting coach at the 4th annual **Major League Baseball Australian Academy**.

The festivities continued in L.A. as *Qantas* executives, travel consultants and Australian media enjoyed a behind-the-scenes visit to *Dodgers Stadium* and later watched a game between the **Dodgers** and **Yankees**.



National League Eastern Division

Player Nationalities



Philadelphia Phillies

Canada, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, USA



New York Mets

Dominican Republic, Japan, Korea, Venezuela, USA



Florida Marlins

Dominican Republic, Korea, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, USA



Atlanta Braves

Cuba, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, USA



Montreal Expos

Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, USA



Sabor A Béisbol at the All-Star Game

Sabor A Béisbol, Major League Baseball's weekly half-hour Spanish language television show, will be airing an All-Star special from Houston. The show, broadcast entirely in Spanish, will feature All-Star player interviews and coverage of the All-Star Week events. *Sabor A Béisbol* is hosted each week by Celines Toribio and features baseball analyst José Mota.

Now in its third season, *Sabor A Béisbol*, is broadcast throughout Latin America and the U.S.



MLB Sponsorship

Europe

MLB and Fox Kids Pitch Baseball to Germany

Fox Kids has come on board as the main sponsor of the **Play Ball!** program in Germany. Throughout the summer, three elements of the development initiative – **Pitch, Hit & Run**, the **Roadshow** and the **Play Ball!** Leagues – will introduce baseball to children in more than 40 schools in 18 cities nationwide. As the principle program sponsor, *Fox Kids* will benefit from visibility on all marketing materials relating to the program, including posters, flyers and a one-page advertisement in the schools workbook. In addition, ITMS, MLB's operating agent in Germany, will feature the new sponsor on two million **Play Ball!**-branded trayliners in *Burger King* stores across the country.

Fox Kids will also run a 30-second TV spot in Germany during June and July. The piece focuses on participation and features all aspects of the **Play Ball!** development initiative. It will run in the late afternoon to ensure the best time frame for the target 10-13 age group and lead kids to the program web site www.mlb-playball.de. In addition, *Fox Kids* is running a **Play Ball!** competition on their web site in Germany, www.foxkids.de.

Fox Kids is one of the largest children's program networks worldwide and currently transmits to 57 countries reaching 36.3 million households. In addition, their online offering covers 17 kids web sites worldwide. Its German outlet, www.foxkids.de is one of the most successful sites for kids in Germany with 400,000 unique users and offers a variety of information, games and competitions.



Baseball Featured at Foot Locker Street Experience in the Netherlands

Major League Baseball has once again teamed up with *Foot Locker*, supporting the *Foot Locker Street Experience* in the Netherlands. Last year, a total of 40,000 baseball participants as well as 53,000 visitors were on site. While baseball was a demonstration sport in last year's *Street Experience*, the 2004 format allows for baseball to be included as a competition sport. At *School Campus Days*, a schools-based team competition will take place that will lead up to a national final at the *Neptunus Baseball Stadium* in Rotterdam.

All *Foot Locker Street Experience* staff will wear *New Era Caps* at the events, and on *School Campus Days*, will also wear *Majestic* baseball jerseys. In addition, baseball will be presented at multi-sport events and stand-alone events in cities across the country.

The climax of the tour is the national final, which will take place in Rotterdam in mid-September. This year MLB will also be incorporated on the *Foot Locker* in-store TV system in 17 cities in the Netherlands and Belgium for August and September. This equates to a monthly reach of over 600,000 people.



MLB Broadcasting



Japanese Advertisers Line Up for Virtual Signage

Major League Baseball International has sold out of its virtual signage inventory for the Japan broadcast of the 2004 **All-Star Game**.

Mastercard, *Japan Airlines*, *Aeon* (department stores), *Kagome* (fruit and vegetable juices), *Brother* (office equipment) and *JACCS* (financial services)

have all signed on to advertise during the broadcast. Their branding will be electronically inserted on the backstop behind home plate on the broadcast signal that is sent to Japan. MLB will use a portion of the inventory for its own branding.

"Virtual Signage allows us the chance to offer our sponsors and other advertisers an effective way to advertise their brands on one of the summer's most-watched television broadcasts in Japan," said MLB Japan Managing Director Jim Small. "While virtual imaging has not been used much in Japan in the past, the market's strong reaction this year shows that it can be an important marketing tool in the years to come."

The game will air live on *NHK* terrestrial and *NHK* broadcast satellite in Japan. The broadcast of the 2003 All-Star Game from Chicago earned a whopping 9.8 rating in Japan despite the fact that it aired at 9:00 a.m. local time.

MLBI World Feed of 2004 All-Star Game to be Broadcast in High Definition

Japanese baseball fans will be viewing the MLBI world feed of the 75th **All-Star Game** in 1080i high definition. MLBI, in conjunction with Japan rights holder *NHK*, will be producing the **Midsummer Classic** using *NHK*'s K-2 mobile unit. The last time the All-Star Game was broadcast in HD was in 2001, and that telecast was the first-ever HD production created for a worldwide television audience by any of the major U.S. sports leagues.

Gary Thorne will again join former All-Star pitcher, Rick Sutcliffe in the broadcast booth for the telecast. MLBI will utilize its own production team to bring you all the action and some flashbacks from All-Star Games past. Broadcast teams from the Dominican Republic, Panama, Puerto Rico, Japan, as well as ESPN International, will be covering the game on site in Houston. Fans from 226 countries and territories around the world will enjoy the excitement of this year's All-Star Game on television as the game will be broadcast in 12 different languages to an estimated audience of more than 100 million.

National League Western Division

Player Nationalities



San Diego Padres

Japan, Mexico,
Puerto Rico,
Venezuela, USA



San Francisco Giants

Dominican
Republic,
Venezuela, USA



Los Angeles Dodgers

Canada,
Dominican
Republic,
Japan, Panama,
Puerto Rico,
Venezuela, USA



Colorado Rockies

Canada, Mexico,
Puerto Rico,
Venezuela, USA



Arizona Diamondbacks

Dominican
Republic,
Mexico,
Puerto Rico, USA

Concept Sports International to be Exclusive Distributor of New Era and Majestic in Australia/New Zealand

Concept Sports International, a long time apparel distribution partner of Major League Baseball in Australia and New Zealand, will soon be the exclusive carrier of New Era and Majestic gear in this marketplace. An exclusive distribution agreement with New Era for their extensive range of MLB headgear went into effect on July 1st and will run through 2007. The contract with Majestic, which is nearing completion, will cover their on-field and fashion apparel line to be rolled out in early 2005.



MLB Licensing & Retail

Asia

MLB T-shirts are Top Seller for Uniqlo

Uniqlo has launched a T-shirt campaign that highlights its entire lineup consisting of over 1,000 T-shirts across 12 licensed brand categories, including the MLB brand. The campaign includes commercials featuring Japanese celebrities and print advertisements in magazines and newspapers. The Uniqlo store, located in Harajuku, was re-named "T Cube" and was transformed into a museum style art gallery displaying the different T-shirts across the walls. During this campaign, the Major League Baseball collection, offered in unisex sizes from small to extra-large, was the highest selling category with more than 400,000 T-shirts sold in a month.



Ｔシャツは、まだまだ面白くなる。

MLB Canned Almonds and Pistachios to Go on Sale

Toyo Nut Co., Ltd. is introducing a line of MLB canned almonds with crackers and canned pistachios that will be sold at supermarkets, GMS and convenience stores. The initial launch will feature six can designs with hopes to expand the collection to a total of 33. The snacks will also be available through gift catalogs where the cans can be packaged in special gift cases, including a six-can gift box set.



Pegasus Adds New MLB Girls Line in Taiwan

Pegasus is introducing a new MLB girl's line to the Taiwan market. The advertising direction for the line is "Active with Fashion Elements." The new girl's line, in addition to Pegasus' current men's collection, makes a coordinated and complete brand statement to both male and female consumers.

Get Ready for Summer with MLB Swimwear

From June through August the MLB ladies and children's swimsuit lines produced by Nikki will be available in department, specialty, and GMS stores. The MLB swimwear collection features men's, women's, boy's and girl's styles and sizes. The men's and boy's styles consist mainly of board shorts. The ladies

styles feature bikinis sold with either coordinating shorts or skirts, while the girls styles are available in both tank top and one piece suits sold with coordinating mesh tops, shorts, or skirts. MLB swimwear accessories such as beach goggles, wrap towels, and beach sandals are also available to complete the look. MLB swimwear was featured in the swimsuit section of the July, 2004 issue of "Pichilemon" magazine. Pichilemon is a popular Japanese fashion magazine that targets elementary and junior high school girls.



Europe

Four New Licensees Sign on with MLB in Europe

Major League Baseball has partnered with four new licensees in Europe in the categories of apparel, outdoor leisure products, stationery and equipment. Alpha Industries, the top U.S. outerwear brand, has been established in Europe over the past six years. The brand has been marketed as a leading fashion label in top European stores including Selfridges, Harrods, Karstadt, Galleries Lafayette and El Corte Ingles. The launch of their Major League Baseball range in 2005 will broaden the licensed products offer to include top end fashion outerwear in upper level retail distribution channels across.

Quantum International Brands, who specialize in outdoor leisure products, will develop a range of MLB products for all ages in this category. The range includes school lunch boxes and bags, picnic cooler bags and drinks holders, melamine products, umbrellas, sunglasses, water bottles and cycle helmets.

MLB's stationery offer has been increased in Europe with the addition of Blueprint Ltd. for the UK and Ireland. Blueprint's strong distribution and design direction in this territory will ensure the increased visibility of MLB products in the stationary retail arena.

Also, in the UK and Ireland, First Base International Ltd. have been granted a license to manufacture MLB branded equipment including baseball sets and individually packaged baseball equipment.

Player Nationalities



Minnesota Twins

Australia, Canada,
Dominican
Republic,
Puerto Rico,
Venezuela, USA



**Chicago
White Sox**

Dominican
Republic, Japan,
Mexico, Panama,
Puerto Rico,
Venezuela, USA



Cleveland Indians

Dominican
Republic,
Japan,
Venezuela, USA



Detroit Tigers

Dominican
Republic,
Puerto Rico,
Venezuela, USA



**Kansas City
Royals**

Canada,
Dominican
Republic,
Mexico, USA

**MLB Envoy
Program Sends
Coaches Around
the Globe**

This year, **Major League Baseball** will send 39 coaches to 26 countries around the world to help develop and grow the game. **MLB Envoy** coaches work with national baseball federations and international baseball organizations to help develop coaches and players, and introduce new fans to the game. Last year's **Envoy Program** reached more than 23,000 participants, including 13,000 new players and 900 coaches.

This summer eight Envoy coaches travelled to The People's Republic of China to help develop young players and coaches as China gears up to host the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.



Europe

Roadshow Tour Proves a Hit in 2004

This season, the UK's **Play Ball! with Frubes Roadshow** retained its streamlined formula introduced in 2003 and visited a record 73 schools. Four crews of two coaches spent a month touring primary schools in the UK, providing more than 10,000 children between six and 12 with a unique baseball experience. Each visit began with an assembly presentation to fuel the children's excitement for the sport and introduce the fundamentals of the game. This was followed by outdoor sessions based around tee ball games and pitching and hitting drills. In addition classroom materials, including a Workbook and Activity Sheet, were provided to each school so that the teachers could continue to educate their pupils on the game.

This interactive introduction to baseball was equally successful in Germany where nearly 9,000 students in 18 cities enjoyed the experience. The kids received tips on pitching, hitting and running as well as comments on tactics and strategy as they prepared for their league games. The highlight of each week was the official start to the **Play Ball! Youth League** in each region, launched at a local *Burger King* restaurant. The events, geared toward generating a wider local interest in baseball, included games, picture sessions and an official uniform presentation.

In both the UK and Germany the principle purpose of the **Roadshow** is to channel children to their local **Play Ball!** league. Forty percent of children reached are expected to register with their local league and many schools are now eager to incorporate baseball into their physical education curricula.



Haarlem Baseball Week

Major League Baseball will support one of European baseball's showcase events, *Haarlem Baseball Week* in the Netherlands. The tournament, which serves as a warm up for the national teams leading up to the Olympics in August, takes place between July 23 and August 1.

This year's event will feature national teams from Cuba, Japan, Chinese Taipei, Italy and the host nation, Holland. Up to 80,000 fans are expected to attend games during the week, making it the largest baseball tournament on the continent.

In addition, Major League Baseball's **Roadshow** will pay a visit to *Haarlem Baseball Week*. The **Roadshow** is a touring, interactive baseball display that showcases the fundamentals of the game in a fun, hands-on environment. It features a batting cage and pitching tunnel, which lets fans experience the game for themselves.



Asia

MLB Stars Returning to Japan for All-Star Series 2004

Renew Rivalry vs. Japan All-Stars This November

This November, Major League Baseball will once again send an All-Star team to Japan to continue their long-running series against their Japanese counterparts in **All-Star Series 2004**.

The Series, sponsored by *Mainichi Shimbun*, will consist of eight games played between November 5th and 14th in Tokyo, Fukuoka, Osaka, Sapporo and Nagoya, Japan. All eight games will feature the **Major League Baseball All-Stars** playing a team of All-Stars from *Japan Professional Baseball*.

"**Major League Baseball** is delighted to be returning to Japan to participate in the **All-Star Series 2004**," said MLB Commissioner Allan H. (Bud) Selig. "The great popularity of previous All-Star Tours and Opening Series, including the 2004 Season Opener between the **Yankees** and **Devil Rays** this past March, illustrate the strong appetite that exists for Major League Baseball in Japan. I am confident that this latest All-Star Tour versus Japan's best players will be exciting and competitive and will further promote baseball as a game with international appeal."

MLB PHOTOS



2002 MLB All-Stars in Japan

While MLB players and teams have traveled to Japan since the 1930's this is the 9th time under the current format that the teams have faced each other since 1986. A MLB All-Star team toured Japan most recently in 2002, finishing 4-3 in a seven-game series. Down three games to none, the MLB team, featuring Barry Bonds, Ichiro, Jason Giambi and Bernie Williams, won the final four games to capture the series.

Both All-Star teams will consist of 28 players. MLB and the MLBPA will select the Major League Baseball All-Star team and staff. The names of the MLB players participating in All-Star Series 2004 will be announced this fall. In Japan, the All-Star team manager and one player at each position will be selected through fan balloting while the Japanese Professional Baseball Organization and the *Mainichi Shimbun* will select the remaining members of the team.

National League Central Division

Player Nationalities



St. Louis Cardinals

Dominican Republic, Japan, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, USA



Chicago Cubs

Cuba, Dominican Republic, Panama, Venezuela, USA



Milwaukee Brewers

Dominican Republic, USA



Cincinnati Reds

Dominican Republic, Mexico, Puerto Rico, USA



Houston Astros

Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, USA



Pittsburgh Pirates

Canada, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Venezuela, USA

MLB.com

Visit Our Website

MLB.com offers the most complete baseball information on the web, including up-to-date statistics, game summaries, extensive historical information, exclusive features about **Major League Baseball** events and programs, on-line ticket sales, baseball merchandise, authenticated memorabilia and collectibles, fantasy games, radio broadcast of games, pitch-by-pitch enactment of games, and video highlights.



MLB Market Development

Asia

MLB to Team with Chinese Baseball Association for First National Schools Tournament

Major League Baseball, the *Chinese Baseball Association* and sporting goods manufacturer *Mizuno* will team to operate the first-ever, national schools baseball tournament in China this summer.

The tournament, which will start in late July, will feature more than 160 teams from schools in four cities – Beijing, Shanghai, Tien Jin and Guangzhou – playing in four divisions – elementary, junior high, high school and university. The teams will play in regional competition with the top teams advancing to a knockout championship tournament in Beijing. Negotiations are ongoing to arrange for the finals to appear on national television in China.

“With the success of their new professional league and the continued improvement of the national team, Chinese baseball continues to grow in popularity,” said Jim Small, Managing Director of MLB Japan and MLB’s Vice President of International Market Development. “The next step in baseball’s development in China is to solidify it as a school-based sport and this tournament will help us do just that.”

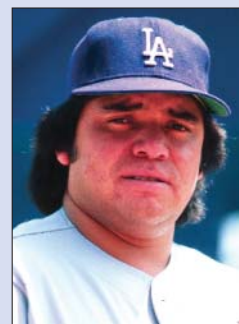
Mizuno is the official sponsor of the tournament and among their contribution to the event will be a full set of uniforms and equipment for the winning teams in each category.



MLB All-Star Q & A

Fernando Valenzuela: 2004 All-Star Futures Game World Team Manager

Former Los Angeles Dodgers great Fernando Valenzuela is currently a Spanish-radio broadcaster for L.A. and has been selected to coach the World team in this year’s New York Mercantile Exchange Futures Game on Sunday, July 11 in Houston. A native of Navajoa, Sonora, Mexico, Valenzuela pitched for 17 seasons in the Major Leagues, helping the Dodgers to two World Series titles (1981, ‘88) and is the only player who has won the Rookie of the Year and Cy Young Award in the same season (1981). The six-time All-Star generated a tremendous amount of excitement during his career, igniting “Fernandomania,” which had a great impact on the game, not only in Southern California, but at the international level as well.



RICH PILLINGS/MLB PHOTOS (2)

MLB: How did you become interested in baseball?

Valenzuela: I became interested in baseball because it was the number one sport in the area that I grew up. I started playing amateur baseball when I was 13 and pro ball in Mexico when I was 16.

Growing up in Mexico, what were your first impressions of Major League Baseball?

When I was younger my focus was on playing in Mexico and on Mexican baseball. But as I grew up the Yankees and Dodgers were the most popular Major League teams and I listened to their games and followed them.

Comment on the development of young players born outside of the U.S.

Every year it has grown more and more. Young players from outside the U.S. feel they have a chance to make it. The Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Japan have a lot of Major League talent. Mexico has some exciting ball players in the Majors right now and plenty of promising players coming up in the Minor Leagues.

Do you feel that baseball is continuing to grow as a sport in Mexico?

Baseball is better now and more popular in Mexico than it was when I was younger. The players are starting a lot younger and learning quicker. Many young players with good talent are coming up in Mexico and being prepared better for the Major Leagues.

You appeared in six straight All-Star games as a player (1981-86), what is your fondest memory of the Midsummer Classic?

It is such a great honor to represent your league and team in an All-Star Game. When I tied the five consecutive-strikeout record in Houston in 1986, that is my fondest memory.

What does being the manager of the World team in the Futures Game mean to you?

I really appreciate that MLB selected me to be part of this game. It is a great honor to coach the World team and it will be very exciting to be a part of the All-Star Game once again.

What is your outlook for this year’s Futures Game?

We will play hard and play to win. It will be a good competition. This is a great game for the fans because they can remember the players names and see them in the big leagues soon.



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Eric Gagne

The bullpen gates swing open, the pulsating beat of *Welcome to the Jungle* blares from the stadium speakers and the phrase: "GAME OVER" blinks on the large video scoreboard. At first glance you notice his weathered hat, large glasses, and untamed goatee. You are watching the reigning **National League Cy Young Award** winner Eric Gagne enter the game, ready to close out another victory for the **Los Angeles Dodgers**.

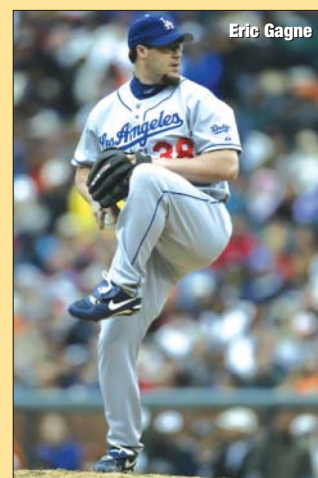
Gagne, who in 2003 became only the ninth reliever to win the Cy Young Award – given to the best pitcher in each league – joined Ferguson Jenkins as the only Canadian-born players to earn the honor. The big right-hander is coming off what is perhaps the greatest season ever for a closer. In 77 relief appearances last season he posted a 1.20 ERA, striking out 137 batters, with a major league-record 14.98 strikeouts per nine innings. Gagne became the first pitcher to record two 50-save seasons and reached the 100-save mark faster than anyone in history. The most noted of his accomplishments is his consecutive saves streak. Last year, Gagne set the major league mark with 63 consecutive saves dating back to August 28, 2002 and continued his perfect run into the 2004 season, where he saved 21 straight to establish an all-time consecutive saves record of 84 games.

Although Gagne is continuously re-writing major league records, he never expected to be looked upon as one of the game's most dominating pitchers. Without speaking a great deal of English, Gagne left Montreal when he was 18 to pursue his baseball career at *Seminole State College* in

Oklahoma. After being drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers, he was called up to the Majors during the 1999 season. However, it wasn't until April of 2002 that the Dodgers made the inspired decision to convert Gagne from a starter to a closer. Gagne took full advantage of this opportunity and has been on of baseball's best stoppers ever since.

The 84 consecutive saves are often compared to other great baseball accomplishments. Dodgers manager Jim Tracy believes it ranks up there among monumental achievements like Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hit streak, Orel Hershiser's 59 straight scoreless innings, and Cal Ripken's 2,630 consecutive games played streak. Tracy notes, "I don't know if you or I or anybody else in our lifetime will see a streak like this."

Former Dodgers manager and Hall of Famer Tommy Lasorda also praises Gagne's brilliance, saying, "I've seen a lot of outstanding relief pitchers, but I've never seen anyone do what he has done."



Eric Gagne

FROM BOTTOM: RICH PILLINGS/MLB PHOTOS; MLB PHOTOS

Mariano Rivera

In Major League Baseball, the *closer* role is often synonymous with the words "clutch" and "consistent." When applied to **New York Yankees** closer Mariano Rivera, those words only begin to tell the story. Rivera, who on June 1, 2004 became the 18th pitcher in Major League history to record 300 saves, has made a career out of consistency and clutch pitching performances.

Born on November 29, 1969 in Panama City, Panama, Rivera spent most of his free time playing baseball as a youth.

Signed by the Yankees in 1990, Rivera made it to the Major Leagues in 1995 as a starting pitcher. The following season, the Yankees moved him to the bullpen where the hard-throwing right-hander immediately became one of the top relief pitchers in the game. After helping New York to their first World Series title in 18 years, Rivera was honored by the Baseball Writers' Association of America (BBWAA) as the recipient of the 1996 *Buck Canel Award*, given to the top Latin American player in Major League Baseball.

With the departure of incumbent Yankees closer John Wetteland after the 1996 season, *Mo*, as his teammates call him, was promoted to the closer role at the beginning of the 1997 campaign. The move proved to be ingenious, as Rivera has averaged nearly 40 saves per season since then.

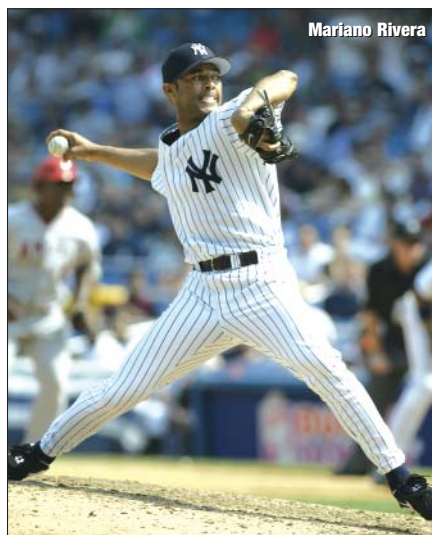
When describing Rivera's

greatness, Yankees manager Joe Torre likes to reference his closer's postseason savvy: "When you talk about his career, the reason he'll go into the **Hall of Fame** is all about the postseason. He's been second to none." If Rivera does make it to the Hall of Fame, he would join Rod Carew as the only players born in Panama to be enshrined in Cooperstown.

Undoubtedly the best October closer of all-time, Rivera holds records for most postseason saves (30) and most **World Series** saves (9). He flaunts an anemic 0.75 earned run average in the playoffs and was named the 1999 **World Series MVP**.

Although Rivera has gained world-class fame as a baseball player, he has not strayed too far from Panama, taking every opportunity to give back to his home country. Aside from financing the construction of a church in Panama City, Rivera has also helped open two *Intel Computer Clubhouses* in the city where he was raised. The Clubhouses are interactive computer stations, which are available at after-school programs and give students access to high-tech equipment, professional software and adult mentors that help to increase learning skills.

With almost a decade of Major League experience under his belt, Rivera's legacy continues to grow. His record on and off the playing field has truly been consistent and clutch.



Mariano Rivera