

Little League magazine

www.LittleLeague.org

2013

PRESENTED BY



BOY WONDER


MIKE TROUT'S rookie feats seem superhuman, especially since he's still a kid himself

Plus:

Lucky Little League grads make it Big

One player's record three trips to Williamsport

INTRODUCING THE UA® SPINE HIGHLIGHT





MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Executive Vice President, Business Timothy J. Brosnan

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PROPERTIES

Senior Vice President, Consumer Products Howard Smith

Vice President, Publishing Donald S. Hintze

Editorial Director Mike McCormick

Publications Art Director Faith M. Rittenberg

Senior Production Manager Claire Walsh

Account Executive, Publishing Chris Rodday

Senior Publishing Coordinator Jake Schwartzstein

Associate Art Director Mark Calimbas

Associate Editor Allison Duffy

Project Assistant Editor Brian Kotloff

Editorial Interns Jordan Rabinowitz, Gerald Schifman

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PHOTOS

Manager Jessica Foster

Photo Editor Jim McKenna

Intern Josh Haunschild

A special thank you to Major League Baseball Corporate Sales and Marketing and Major League Baseball Licensing for advertising sales support.

For Major League Baseball info, visit: MLB.com



LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL

539 U.S. Route 15 Highway

P.O. Box 3485

Williamsport, PA 17701-0485

(570) 326-1921

Chairman Dr. Davie Janie Gilmour

President & CEO Stephen D. Keener

Senior VP of Administration & CFO David B. Houseknecht

Senior VP of Operations and Program Development

Patrick W. Wilson

Corporate Secretary Joseph W. Losch

VP and Treasurer Melissa L. Singer

VP of Marketing and Strategic Partnerships Elizabeth

DiLullo Brown

VP and Executive Director Little League Museum

Lance Van Auken

VP of Risk Management Daniel Kirby

Director of Public Relations Scott Rosenberg

Director of Publicity Chris Downs

For Little League info, visit: www.LittleLeague.org

If you have any questions or comments regarding material in this publication, please send letters to: Attention: Editor, MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL, 245 Park Avenue, 29th Floor, New York, NY 10167

© 2013 Major League Baseball Properties, Inc. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Printed in the USA.

Little League[®] magazine

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY JOEY TERRILL



4 Around the Horn

News from Little League to the Major Leagues.

10 Big Fish

2012 American League Rookie of the Year Mike Trout wasted no time rising from Little League star to one of MLB's elite. *By Tim Brown*

16 Playing the Game:

Pablo Sandoval

Tips on playing third base.

20 From Near & Far

Japan capped a momentous Little League Baseball World Series with its second title in three years.

27 Playing the Game:

Chris Perez

Tips on pitching with confidence.

28 Mike Trout poster

30 A Wing and a Prayer

Behind a handful of standout performances, these teams fulfilled their title hopes during 2012 tournaments across the country.

37 Williamsport Wonder

Thanks to a unique rule change, Matt Timoney became the first and only Little Leaguer to play in three Little League Baseball World Series. *By Chris Downs*

40 All Grown Up

MLB's Little League Baseball World Series graduates couldn't have predicted where their experiences would take them. *By Brian Kotloff*

47 For Love of the Game

Women's College World Series stars cherish their Little League days. *By Lauren Gilbert*

50 Playing the Game:

Raven Chavanne

Tips on contact hitting.

52 Fun & Games

Test your baseball knowledge with these challenging puzzles featuring Hall-of-Fame players and Little League facts.

56 Field of Dreams

A snapshot from the 2012 Little League Baseball World Series.



2013 LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES TOURNAMENTS

The dates and sites for the nine Little League World Series tournaments in 2013 stretch from coast to coast and span more than a month this summer.



BIG LEAGUE BASEBALL (15–18-year-olds)

July 24–31 — Easley, S.C. (Easley Recreation Complex). 13th season in Easley; 46th season overall

2012 Champion: Puerto Rico District 1 (San Juan)

LITTLE LEAGUE INTERMEDIATE 50/70 BASEBALL (11–13-year-olds)

July 30–Aug. 5 — Livermore, Calif. (Max Baer Park). First season in Livermore; first season overall

BIG LEAGUE SOFTBALL (14–18-year-old girls)

Aug. 4–10 — Lower Sussex, Del. (Lower Sussex Little League Complex). First season in Lower Sussex; 32nd season overall

2012 Champion: Philippines District 1 (Manila)

SENIOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL (13–16-year-old girls)

Aug. 4–10 — Lower Sussex, Del. (Lower Sussex Little League Complex). 13th season in Lower Sussex; 38th season overall

2012 Champion: ASOFEM Little League (Maunabo, P.R.)

LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL (11–12-year-old girls)

Aug. 8–14 — Portland, Ore. (Alpenrose Stadium). 20th season in Portland; 40th season overall

2012 Champion: Eastlake Little League (Albuquerque, N.M.)

JUNIOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL (13–14-year-old girls)

Aug. 11–17 — Kirkland, Wash. (Everest Park). 15th season in Kirkland; 15th season overall

2012 Champion: Nunaka Little League (Anchorage, Alaska)

JUNIOR LEAGUE BASEBALL (13–14-year-olds)

Aug. 11–17 — Taylor, Mich. (Heritage Park). 33rd season in Taylor; 33rd season overall

2012 Champion: Rockledge Little League (Fla.)

SENIOR LEAGUE BASEBALL (13–16-year-olds)

Aug. 11–17 — Bangor, Maine (Shawn T. Mansfield Stadium). 12th season in Bangor; 53rd season overall

2012 Champion: Juvenil de Guatemala Little League (Guatemala City)

LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL (11–12-year-olds)

Aug. 15–26 — South Williamsport, Pa. (Lamade and Volunteer Stadiums). 55th season in South Williamsport; 67th season overall

2012 Champion: Kitasuna Little League (Tokyo)

DAY AT THE PARK

Dick's Sporting Goods (DSG) is a proud partner of Little League Baseball and Softball. In 2012, 100 Little Leaguers from four leagues in Pennsylvania were treated to an outing at the Little League Baseball World Series as part of the Dick's Sporting Goods "Day at the Park." The event included baseball skills instruction from Baseball Factory, a tour of the Little League Museum, a guest appearance by former Big Leaguer Brian Jordan and the opportunity to throw out the ceremonial first pitch at a Little League championship game. With the success of this program, DSG plans to bring additional teams to experience the magic of the Little League Baseball World Series in 2013.



BUDDY BADGE

Subway has been a longtime sponsor of Little League Baseball and Softball, encouraging kids and their families to stay active and eat healthy. Last season, Subway supported the Little League Challenger Division, a program for individuals with physical and mental challenges, through its "Buddy Badge" Logo Contest on the Subway Facebook page. The winning design was announced at the 2012 Little League Baseball World Series and will be used throughout the 2013 Little League Challenger Division season. As part of the initiative, Subway donated \$2,500 to each of the Challenger teams that attended the Little League Baseball World Series to help offset their travel expenses.

WINNING DRIVE

In its 17th year as a Little League sponsor, Honda will be giving away a car during championship weekend. Enter Honda's sweepstakes for a chance to win by visiting LittleLeague.honda.com and stop by Camp Honda during the 2013 Little League Baseball World Series.



NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. A PURCHASE WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE 48 CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES (D.C.) 18 YEARS AND OLDER WHO HAVE A VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE. VOID IN AK, HI AND WHERE PROHIBITED. FOR OFFICIAL RULES, PRIZE DESCRIPTIONS AND ODDS DISCLOSURE, VISIT [HTTP://WWW.LITTLELEAGUE.HONDA.COM](http://WWW.LITTLELEAGUE.HONDA.COM) AFTER APRIL 1, 2013. SPONSOR: AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO., INC., 1919 TORRANCE, CA 90501

LITTLE LEAGUE THANKS ITS SPONSORS

For more than 60 years, Little League has partnered with national corporations. We thank our current national partners (listed below) for their continued support of our program, which allows us to keep charter fees low and offer invaluable resources such as the Coach's Resource Center, tournament travel assistance and free rule books for our leagues.

Active Network * Baseball Factory * Chiquita * Dick's Sporting Goods * Easton * Dudley Softball * Gatorade * Hilton HHonors * Honda * Kellogg's Frosted Flakes * Musco Sports Lighting * New Era * New York Life Insurance * Russell Athletic * Spalding Baseball * Subway Restaurants * Sun Products (all laundry detergent & Snuggle fabric softener) * Wells Dairy — Bomb Pop

Around the Horn



The Latest Baseball Bat Info

Little League International's Baseball Bat Resource webpage provides current information on the 2013 Little League Baseball rules and regulations governing bats.

The webpage (www.littleleague.org/learn/equipment/baseballbatinfo.htm) includes a list of licensed bats only — not a list of all possible bats that could be used. Provided the bat meets the specification of Rule 1.10 for the division of play and is not subject to the moratorium, it may be used.



REALIZING THEIR POTENTIAL

Easton is committed to the science of hitting and helping players at all levels realize their performance potential on the field. Utilizing state-of-the-art radar technology and instant performance feedback, Easton has developed the Hit Lab to help players choose the right bat for their swing type and style. During the 2012 Little League Baseball World Series, Easton worked with every team to help its members find the correct Power Brigade bats for their game.

POCKET BOOK

Whether you are a coach, parent or fan, knowing the rules can make a difference. With the new Little League rule books applications, you can find rules and regulations instantly on your mobile device. Download the Little League Baseball, Softball, Challenger Division or the Little League 3-in-1 app today from your iTunes or Google Play app stores.

In the Palm of Your Hands

Little League Baseball and Softball are connected with tens of thousands of fans and supporters on the Internet through several constituent-specific social media pages on Facebook, and the organization continues to distribute news and information through Twitter. Join the conversation at [facebook/LittleLeagueBaseballandSoftball/](https://www.facebook.com/LittleLeagueBaseballandSoftball/), or follow Little League at [twitter/LittleLeague](https://twitter.com/LittleLeague).



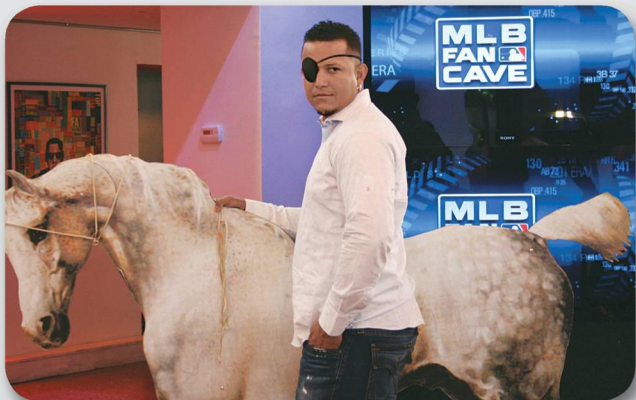
PITCH, HIT & RUN

Little Leaguers have the opportunity to play their way into a Major League ballpark this spring by participating in Major League Baseball Pitch, Hit & Run, a free official skills competition.

Local competitions are held in communities across North America. Local winners in the three categories — pitching to a strike zone target, hitting for distance and accuracy, and running against the clock from second base to home plate — can advance to the sectional games in their region. Top players will move on to the team championships, which are hosted by each of the 30 Major League clubs. The best will advance to the national finals at the 2013 All-Star Game in New York! Communities are scheduling their MLB Pitch, Hit & Run competitions now, and by mid-March, the official website (MLB.com/phr) will have a list of them all, so you can find the one closest to you.

Attention coaches: Visit MLB.com/phr to register to host a free PHR Local Competition in your area.

COURTESY LITTLE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL®



MLB Fan Cave

The **MLB Fan Cave** is home to some of the funniest moments involving MLB stars caught on video, including Miguel Cabrera putting on an eye patch and transforming into "Miggy Poco." It's also home to the "Cave Dwellers," superfans who get to live every baseball fan's dream. It's literally their *job* to come to the MLB Fan Cave every day and watch all 2,430 games on a giant wall of TVs while tweeting and blogging about their experience and meeting baseball stars, musicians and other famous guests. It all goes down in a huge building at the corner of 4th Street and Broadway in New York City. Log on to MLBFanCave.com throughout the season and follow @MLBFanCave on Twitter to find out who will visit and what pranks are in store this season.

PAGE CALAMAR/MLB PHOTO (2)

GOING PRO

After passing through every division of the Little League program, Astros prospect Carlos Correa developed into a premier shortstop by the time he was 17 years old.

In 2012, he made history by becoming the first Puerto Rican player ever selected with the No. 1 pick of MLB's First-Year Player Draft. Correa, an honor roll graduate of the Puerto Rico Baseball Academy and High School, became the fourth shortstop since 1994 to be chosen first overall.

Four former Little Leaguers who played in Williamsport were also chosen last year, including 2006 participant Gavin Cecchini, the Mets' first-round pick at No. 12.



REVERSE-A PAIS™



Major League Baseball trademarks and copyrights are used with permission of Major League Baseball Properties, Inc. Visit MLB.com.



BIG FISH

*2012 American League Rookie of the Year
Mike Trout wasted no time rising from
Little League star to one of MLB's elite.*

By Tim Brown

A YOUNG MAN FROM MILLVILLE, N.J., ARRIVED IN LOS Angeles for good in late April 2012, and by season's end had posted one of the great rookie seasons in baseball history. Mike Trout — center fielder, leadoff hitter, phenom — hit home runs and took them away, inspired foam fish headwear among the Angel Stadium faithful, led the Major Leagues in stolen bases and challenged for the American League Most Valuable Player Award. Less than a decade after playing in Millville (N.J.) Little League, Trout was anything but an ordinary rookie in 2012.

At the end of his Rookie of the Year Award-winning season, he talked about his breathtaking summer, what got him there, who helped along the way and his love for *Happy Gilmore*.





Looking back at your first full Big League season, what is the moment that stands out?

It's got to be the All-Star Game, which was just a great all-around experience. As a kid, that's the one game you always watched. It was great being there with all of those future Hall of Famers like Derek Jeter, Miguel Cabrera and Prince Fielder. It was pretty neat to bond and spend some time with them.

Who was the one player you had to meet during those two days in Kansas City?

Probably Jeter. I had met him before, but only briefly, and I didn't really get to know him like I wanted to. Then one day, when he was eating lunch, I went over and sat next to him and we talked. He's a great all-around dude. He was very cool to talk to.

Which player made the largest impression on you last season?

Torii Hunter. The way he plays the game, there's so much that I learned from playing next to him. Having somebody to go to when I was down, when I needed to know something or I wanted to learn was so important. Coming up, it was a whirlwind. Him being there calmed me down. He kept telling me what to expect.

What advice from him do you carry with you every day?

Play the game the right way. Always be aggressive. He's always running out ground balls and hustling. Learn new things each day. For example, he talks about the first step in the outfield, that it's important for making those big

catches and game-changers. Another thing he says a lot is to stay humble.

You missed the first month of the season while playing in Triple-A, but came up and still led the AL in runs and stolen bases, ranked second in OPS, third in on-base percentage, and tied for 13th — with Fielder and Albert Pujols — in home runs. Which of those numbers are you most proud of?

Probably the runs. As a leadoff hitter, you want to score runs for the team. Every chance you get on base, the goal is to get to second base, then third base and then home. That's probably the main thing that I worry about: runs scored. And that's a team thing. I couldn't have done it without guys hitting me in.

Go back to April 2012. You were playing for the Salt Lake Bees. What were your expectations of the season on that day?

I just told myself that I was going to be in Salt Lake City. I

METEORIC RISE

THE GREAT BAMBINO. THE BIG UNIT. KUNG FU Panda. All great baseball players past and present are immortalized with a clever nickname. And when it came time to grant Mike Trout his, fans didn't need to look further than the internet.

At an autograph signing last season, several fans asked Trout to pen "The Millville Meteor" on their baseballs. When he asked them where they came across it, they told him it was on his Wikipedia page. The nickname, fashioned after Trout's hometown and his quick rise to baseball supremacy, has earned his stamp of approval.

was trying my hardest to get back up here. So I was taking it one game at a time down there, trying to help the team win and do what I've been doing my whole life — just playing the game and having fun.

Over two stints in the Major Leagues in 2011, you batted .220. Over five months in 2012, you batted .326. How did that happen?

My first year, I was getting my feet wet. The game was just so sped up. Everything's top speed. I didn't get to play every day, either. Ever since I was a kid I had played every game. This year, Mike Scioscia put me in the lineup batting leadoff and kept me there. Coming to the field knowing that I was going to be in the lineup definitely helped my confidence level.

What's your hometown like?

Just a small town. Not much to do. I live out in the sticks. I moved out of town a little bit, live on a farm. It's pretty chill.

Is it a place where you can leave the Big League pace behind and just be Mike?

Yeah, I can go home and go out in the woods, hunt, fish, golf a little bit. People are going to recognize me obviously, but it's pretty cool. Whenever my parents come out to see me in Los Angeles, they say there are signs all over Millville saying: "Hometown of Mike Trout of the Angels."

Millville is considered to be in Phillies country. The Phillies won the World Series in 2008, when you were a junior in high school. What was that like?

I was at Citizens Bank Park with my buddies for one of the games. We decided to check it out, tailgate a little bit. We went up for one game even though we didn't have tickets. It was crazy, man. We drove up in my truck, sat in the parking lot, put the little TV in the back and grilled out. We had the radio on, too. It was pretty cool just hearing the crowd reaction and being near the stadium with people partying.

I understand you're quite the fan of the movie Happy Gilmore. What's that about?

Favorite all-time movie. I know every line, every scene. I could watch it over and over and still laugh. It's on my computer, so every time I'm home and get bored, I watch it.

Your father was drafted by the Minnesota Twins in 1983 and played four seasons in the Minor Leagues. When you left for the pros, what advice did he give you?

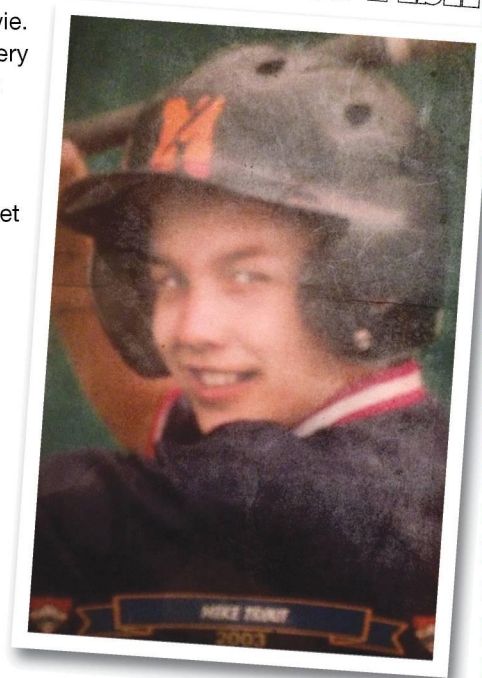
Always stay humble. Once you think you've figured out the game, it's going to come back and bite you. So always keep your head on straight and stay humble, don't be too cocky and go out there and have fun.

He's helped me not just on the field, but off it. Getting drafted, knowing what to expect, the home life, being away from home, the homesickness — he helped me out a lot.

Your parents, Jeff and Debbie, have been very supportive of your baseball pursuits. What role did they play in your development?

They've been there since day one. I wouldn't be here, in the position that I am, without them. All the sacrifices they made and the money they spent when I was in high school, it was tough on them. Now that I'm up in the Major Leagues, they can enjoy life knowing that they have a son in the Big Leagues. It makes them proud, and I do it for them. ♦

Tim Brown is a national baseball writer for Yahoo! Sports.



MIKE TROUT'S SPECTACULAR ROOKIE SEASON WAS DEFINED BY HIS GAUDY NUMBERS: .326 (batting average), 129 (runs scored) and 49 (stolen bases). But the gaudiest of them all — 550 — came more than three months into the offseason.

That would be the weight (in approximate pounds) of the fish he caught during a trip to Key West, Fla. Yes, one goliath grouper was equal to two-and-a-half Trouts.

The Rookie of the Year's girlfriend and brother each tweeted photos of the monster before they released it, eliciting a boatload of puns and baseball analogies. LarryBrownSports.com reeled in our first-place prize with a simple question: "Is there anything Mike Trout can't catch?" —Brian Kotloff

Playing the Game

PABLO SANDOVAL ON **PLAYING THIRD BASE**



Playing third base is harder than it looks. Just ask 2012 World Series MVP Pablo “Kung Fu Panda” Sandoval. The San Francisco Giants All-Star didn’t just wake up one day with the ability to make diving catches and hit three home runs in a World Series game. His success is the result of years of hard work and dedication in the field and at the plate. Here are a few of Sandoval’s tips on how to become hot stuff at the hot corner:



FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

Set yourself before each pitch. Get ready for the ball. Expect it to come to you.

You should start looking at the pitcher when he starts his wind-up. Before the ball gets past home plate, you have to get your feet set and get ready to field the ball by bending your knees and keeping your head up.

Always try to catch the ball between your feet. That’s the best position to be in whether you’re left-handed or right-handed. Try to field it between your feet, and then set yourself to make a strong throw.

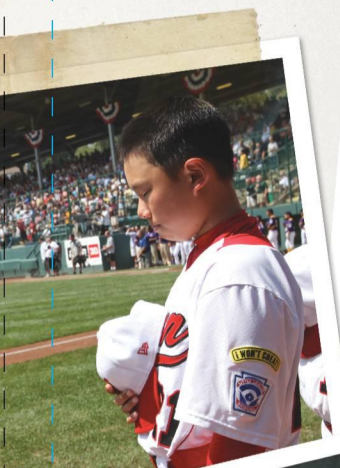
WORK HARD, PLAY HARD

You have to work hard both on defense and at the plate. Every day, take your swings, work on your skills. Try to get better. The important thing at home plate is being patient. That was a tip I got when I was a little kid. Wait for a pitch you know you can hit.

At the plate and in the field, success is about the work you put in. You’re going to do well in the game if you’re working hard. Think about the game before the game or even before the practice. It’s the work you do every day that’s going to make you better. ♦

FROM NEAR & FAR

Japan capped a momentous
Little League Baseball World Series
with its second title in three years.





THE SUMMER OF 2012 MARKED THE 66TH annual Little League Baseball World Series (LLBWS) in Williamsport, Pa. Those who turned out or tuned in during the 10-day tournament were treated to quite the spectacle: A team traveled thousands of miles to represent Uganda for the first time; a 12-year-old from Connecticut threw a no-hitter; and a young Tennessee slugger clubbed three home runs in one game. And those feats just scratched the surface.

In the end, the kids from Japan prevailed, bringing the country its eighth Little League Baseball World Series title. The Kitasuna All-Stars hit five homers in the final game en route to a 12-2 victory over Goodlettsville, Tenn., on Aug. 26.

The victory, before 24,193 fans at Howard J. Lamade Stadium, gave Japan its second World Series championship in the last three years. Edogawa Minami Little League of Tokyo had won Japan's most recent championship in 2010 by beating Waipio Little League from Hawaii.

"I just told them to play as usual," Kitasuna Manager Yoichi Kubo, who also led the team to a title in 2001, said through an interpreter. "I tried to manage as usual, too. I didn't want to change a thing. It's a special feeling."

Noriatsu Osaka went deep three times and Kotaro Kiyomiya struck out eight over four innings as Japan waltzed to the victory. The game was shortened to five innings because of the 10-run rule.

Osaka finished the day 4 for 4 with a triple and 15 total bases. His two-run homer in the bottom of the fifth capped the 10-run triumph. He batted .526 (10 for 19) with three doubles, a triple, four homers and 11 RBI in five games during the tournament.

Kiyomiya allowed only a Brock Myers solo home run with one out in the fourth to break up his no-hit bid. It was Myers' fifth 2012 World Series home run.

Kiyomiya and Osaka were quick to compliment each other's efforts. "I did a very good job," Kiyomiya said. "But I have to thank Osaka."

FROM NEAR & FAR



“Our pitching staff did really well,” Osaka added. “Kiyomiya did a good job.”

Already leading, 3-0, Yuta Ishida made it 5-0 in the third with a two-run homer to center field. Japan tacked on five more runs in the fifth, thanks to Osaka’s second solo shot and another two-run blast.

Tennessee was making its first title game appearance in five trips to South Williamsport. No team from the Volunteer State had ever made it this far in the World Series. The club played the World Series title game one day after its dramatic 24-16 victory over California in the U.S. national championship. The Goodlettsville All-Stars surrendered a 10-run lead in the bottom of the sixth to send that game to extra innings, but then scored nine times in the seventh to earn their title bid.

“I think we’ll be remembered more for that game,” said Tennessee Manager Joey Hale. “They showed a lot of heart, character and determination, and I couldn’t be more proud of them.” ♦

Faces of Little League

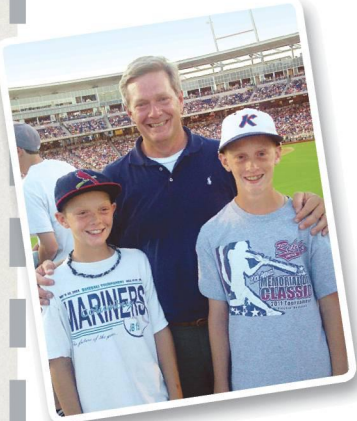
The emotions on the faces of Little League players speak volumes about the commitment, effort and fun they have on and off the field.



INSIDE PERSPECTIVE:

Beyond Your Wildest Dreams

By Coach Todd Herges



LIKE MANY COACHES, I was raised to love and respect the national pastime. The summer days of my youth were spent playing baseball with my brothers and friends on a local sandlot, and the nights were spent listening to my favorite Major League team on the radio.

I admit that I might have developed a deeper love than some, being that my grandfather was a scout for the St. Louis Cardinals. The fact that I have five younger brothers who were always ready to play pickle or pepper, if not a real game, helped, too. One of my brothers, Matt, ultimately made it to The Show, racking up almost 500 strikeouts as a middle reliever and even pitching well in the postseason.

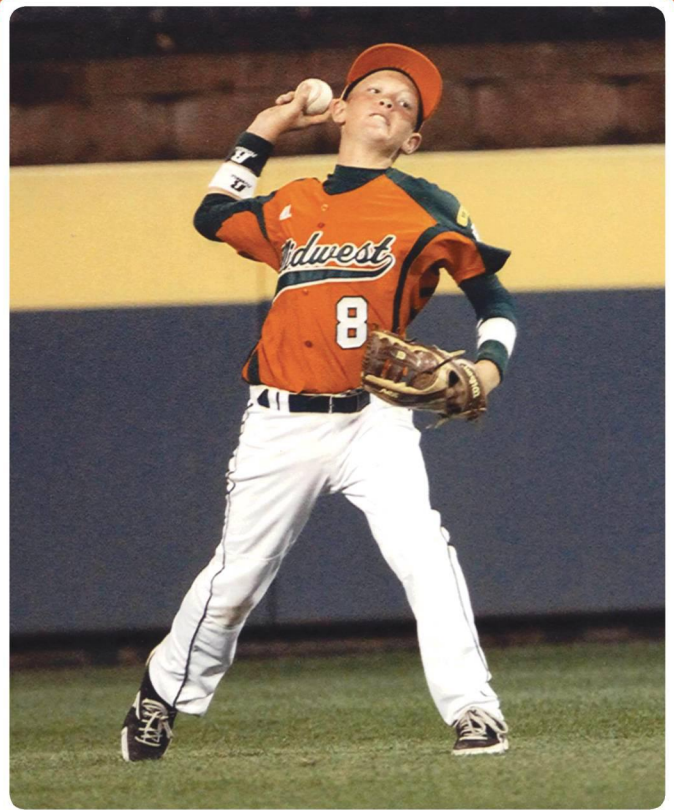
Naturally, I heard about Williamsport and the Little League Baseball World Series a long time ago. I can tell you from experience that the LLBWS

simply defies description. Saying that it's "a pretty fun time" is like saying the Indianapolis 500 is "a little bit loud" or the stretch run at the Kentucky Derby is "kind of exciting." And the most amazing thing is that it is absolutely attainable.

It may look nice on television, but you have no idea just how beautiful Williamsport really is until you observe it yourself — 78 acres of breathtaking baseball purity. The diamonds are pristine, the crowds are electric and the aura of the place — made up of the myriad volunteer umpires, ushers, hosts, officials, broadcasters, trainers and fans, not to mention players and coaches from all over the globe — makes it feel like baseball heaven.

Everyone who wants a shot at participating in Little League gets one. Everyone who signs up has the chance to build memories, grow as a person and someday have a story to tell their own kids about. It takes a lot of work and focus, as well as a humble spirit of service, to keep Little League humming the way it does year after year for the millions of people who participate.

It also takes an incredible effort to put



on the championship tournament.

Around the first of July each year, roughly 7,000 teams from across the globe start along the path toward South Williamsport. In six short weeks, that number is whittled down to 16. And then those 16 teams are transported to baseball heaven, where they are outfitted with new uniforms and gear, housed and fed, interviewed and recorded, paraded and celebrated.

They also get time to practice each day in a remarkably beautiful setting. After their long journeys and steadfast preparations, they finally get to take the diamond and display their skills and pure love of the game before thousands of appreciative fans. The fact that there are about 10 million more watching on television is too fantastic to comprehend.

Players who give it their all, compete for a spot on their league's tournament team, practice hard and always do their best will enjoy the LLBWS no matter if they experience it as a participant or as a fan, in person or on television. The teams who don't make it all the way to the end are kindred spirits to the lucky 200 or so who do get the chance to compete on that grand Pennsylvania stage.

But either way, as a team of players or as a group of fans, find a way to get to Williamsport in person. You will be better for experiencing it firsthand. I promise.

Todd Herges was a coach on the team from Kearney, Neb., that represented the Midwest region at the 2012 LLBWS. His son, Mark (above), was an 11-year-old on the team.

INSIDE PERSPECTIVE:

A Season to Remember

By Loyalsock (Pa.) Little Leaguer Evan Nagy

THE 2012 LITTLE LEAGUE season was one that I'll never forget. I enjoyed plenty of individual accomplishments, but my dad, Eric, won't let me talk about them. He says baseball is a team sport, and I had the opportunity to play for two outstanding teams.

The regular season for our team, sponsored by Crouse's Funeral Home, started in the middle of March. At our first practice, we met our coaches and we each stated our goal for the upcoming season. I said, "Let's win another championship."

For three months straight, we practiced or played six days a week. I got to play my favorite position, first base, and hit third in the order. My manager, Richard Holz, also let me gain some experience on the mound, which would help me out later in the summer.

Playing on the Crouse's team taught me how to be a better ballplayer and person by always working hard, respecting coaches and staying humble. My team finished 24-0 and won its fifth straight league title, and I was selected to play on the 10-11-year-old All-Star team.

My dad was the manager of our All-Star team, and

we practiced for the District tournament almost every day for two weeks before it began. I wish it would have been every day. I also got to go to Little League Baseball Day Camp during those two weeks. I met a lot of new kids, including Patrick, who actually played for East Lycoming Little League (Pennsylvania District 12), our first District foe.

On the last day of camp, I had to leave early to get ready for our first game. But before I left, I got a chance to play in Williamsport's Lamade Stadium and hit a home run over the center-field fence. That night, we beat Patrick's team before rolling through Districts with a 4-0 record. We were ready to travel to Mahanoy City, Pa., for Sectionals.

In Sectionals, we won our first game against Athens Little League, but lost to a tough Cressona (Pa.) team in the winner's bracket final. We had to battle back through the loser's bracket and beat Cressona twice to win the Sectional title. The experience taught us to never stop fighting until the final out.

We moved on to the State tournament, which began just three days later. Because we had to use our best pitchers to win Sectionals, I got to



start the opening game of States. After waiting out a long rain delay, we were able to win our first game, 8-7. As a matter of fact, we won our first two games and qualified for the semi-finals versus the 2011 state champions from Middletown (Pa.) at the 9-10-year-old level. We played our best game of the summer and beat them, 9-4, giving us a chance to win our league's first State title.

The following night, we beat West Point (Pa.) Little

League with the help of our families, friends and the "Pittston Rowdies" — a group of kids from the local district who adopted our team as their own.

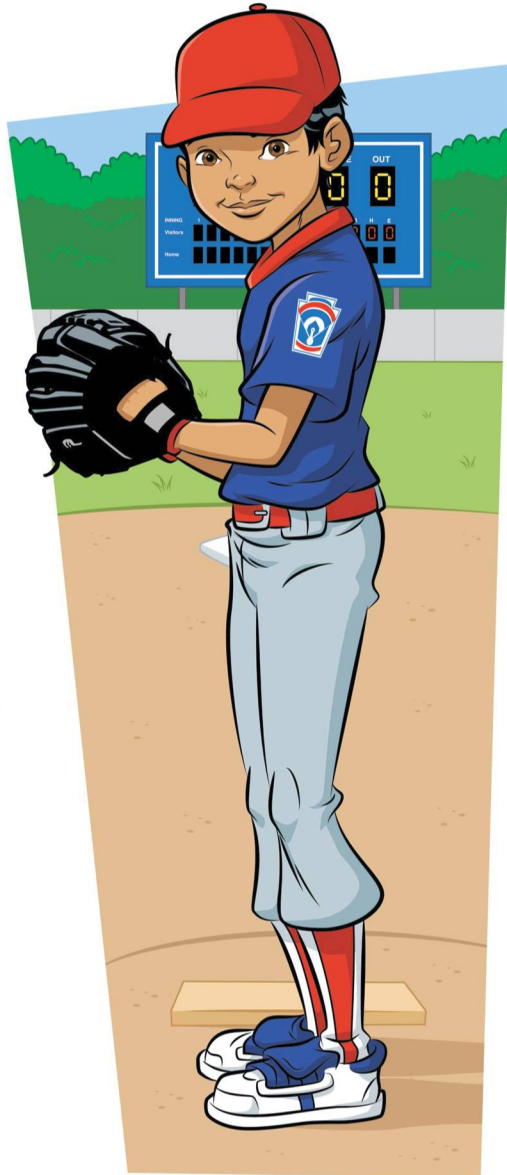
As 10-11-year-olds, you can only go as far as States. Our season was over. Part of me was glad because I was exhausted from six months of ball, but another part of me wanted to keep going. I've already started preparing for next year, but I'll never forget the memories from the best summer ever.

Playing the Game

CHRIS PEREZ ON PITCHING WITH CONFIDENCE



As a Major League closer, Chris Perez knows what it takes to go toe-to-toe with some of the best hitters in the game while everything is on the line. His 39 saves for the Cleveland Indians in 2012 were just as much a result of his poise and intimidation as they were his mechanics — skills that he has worked on since Little League. Here's some advice from Perez on how to become a force to be reckoned with on the mound:



KEEP AN OPEN MIND

Listen to everybody. Don't get locked into having one motion or using one arm slot. Everybody's different, and your body's going to grow. You might be 6 foot 5 by the time you get out of high school, or you might be 5 foot 10. Take it all in, try everything and if something doesn't work for you, say, 'No, thank you,' and do something that does work.

MASTER YOUR CRAFT

On the mound, trust your stuff. It's better to be a master of one thing than a jack-of-all-trades. Master your fastball before you worry about a curveball.

Don't get discouraged by your results — it's a process, so stick to it. In the grand scheme of things, Little League is supposed to be fun, right? If you go out and give up five home runs, you won't be happy about it, but that's how you learn. Baseball's one of those sports that you have to keep playing whenever you can. You can't take the season off.

INTIMIDATION FACTOR

If you are friends with your opponent off the field, once you get on that field, you have to beat him or her. It's a mental game, it's competition, and either you rise to the top and meet the challenge or fold under pressure. Don't let anybody intimidate you, especially if you're a pitcher. Nobody can play until you throw. You get the ball moving and control where it goes. ♦

BIG LEAGUE SUPERSTAR

MIKE TROUT

Outfield

Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim
Millville (N.J.) Little League





A WING AND A PRAY

Behind a handful of standout performances, these teams fulfilled their title hopes during 2012 tournaments across the country.

LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL MAY BE WILLIAMSPORT'S CALLING CARD, BUT SEVEN OTHER World Series tournaments for players 11-18 years old take place around the country each summer. The annual, month-long showcase returned in 2012, with baseball and softball's best youth squads flocking to diamonds near and far to determine their division's champions.

JUNIOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Rockledge (Fla.) Little League scored two runs in the top of the eighth inning to defeat Aruba North Little League, 12-10, and capture the 32nd Junior League Baseball World Series in Taylor, Mich. Rockledge broke open a 2-2 tie in the fourth inning on a Mason Studstill three-run homer and added two more runs the following inning to take a 7-2 lead. But Aruba gradually fought back and scored twice in the bottom of the seventh to send the game into extra innings.

Trevor Payne of the Southeast champions opened the eighth inning with a walk and later scored on a balk for the deciding run. Studstill provided the power, hitting two home runs and driving in four, while teammate Andrew Parrish went 3 for 4 with one RBI. Jeandrick Odubar led Aruba, going 2 for 4 while knocking in three.

The victory gave Rockledge its first championship, the second straight and fifth overall for the Sunshine State.



SENIOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Juvenil de Guatemala Little League from Guatemala City completed its impressive run through the 52nd Senior League Baseball World Series in Bangor, Maine, by defeating Lemon Grove (Calif.) Little League, 6-3, to win its first championship. The Latin America Region representatives outscored all of their opponents a combined 39-8 to finish with a perfect 5-0 record in the World Series.

Lemon Grove, the West Region champions, couldn't figure out Alejandro Amezcuita, who threw five innings and gave up just three hits and two earned runs en route to the victory. He finished the Series 2-0 with a 1.80 ERA. The team's staff finished with a 1.46 ERA and one shutout while holding opponents to a .128 batting average. Guatemala scored three runs each in both the third and sixth innings, with the final three coming home on a passed ball and two bases-loaded walks.



AYER



BIG LEAGUE BASEBALL

With two outs in the sixth inning, Rafael Olivares lined a single to left field that drove in a pair of runs and capped the scoring for Puerto Rico District 1 in a 7-3 victory over South Carolina District 1. The team from San Juan, P.R., came into the championship game in Easley, S.C., having outscored its opponents 53-3 in five games.

But Puerto Rico had begun the third inning trailing, 3-0, until left fielder Alexis Cruz hit a three-run homer to tie it. The club tacked on the go-ahead run later in the inning on an RBI double by first baseman Alexis Olmeda.



A WING AND A PRAYER

LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL

Eastdale Little League from Albuquerque, N.M., went 6-0 in the 2012 Little League Softball World Series, capped by a 16-1, five-inning victory over Windermere (Fla.) Softball Little League in the title game held in Portland, Ore. After taking an early 4-0 lead, Eastdale added one run in the second inning and put the game away with an 11-run fifth inning. Eastdale became the second champions from New Mexico in the 39-year history of the World Series.



JUNIOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL

The Nunaka Valley Little League softball team (West Region champions) from Anchorage, Alaska, captured the 14th Junior League Softball World Series in Kirkland, Wash., by defeating Layritz Little League (Canada Region champions) from Victoria, British Columbia, 6-2.

Nunaka Valley scored all six of its runs in the first three innings, while pitcher Lauren Syrup improved her series record to 4-1 and lowered her ERA to 2.67.



SENIOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL

ASOFEM Little League, the Latin American Region champion from Maunabo, P.R., won the Senior League Softball World Series, 6-4, over Woodbridge Little League from Greenwood, Del., behind a complete-game effort from pitcher Jocelyn De Leon.

Trailing early, Puerto Rico scored three runs in the top of the fifth inning to take a 5-4 lead, highlighted by a run-scoring double from Yahelis Munoz.



BIG LEAGUE SOFTBALL

The Philippines' District 1 team from Manila, which lost in the title game in each of the past two seasons, opened the World Series with consecutive losses before putting together a seven-game winning streak en route to the championship.

The team rolled to a 14-2, five-inning victory over California District 37 at Bud Vanderberg Park in Kalamazoo, Mich., to become the first team from the International Region to be crowned Big League Softball World Series champs. ♦



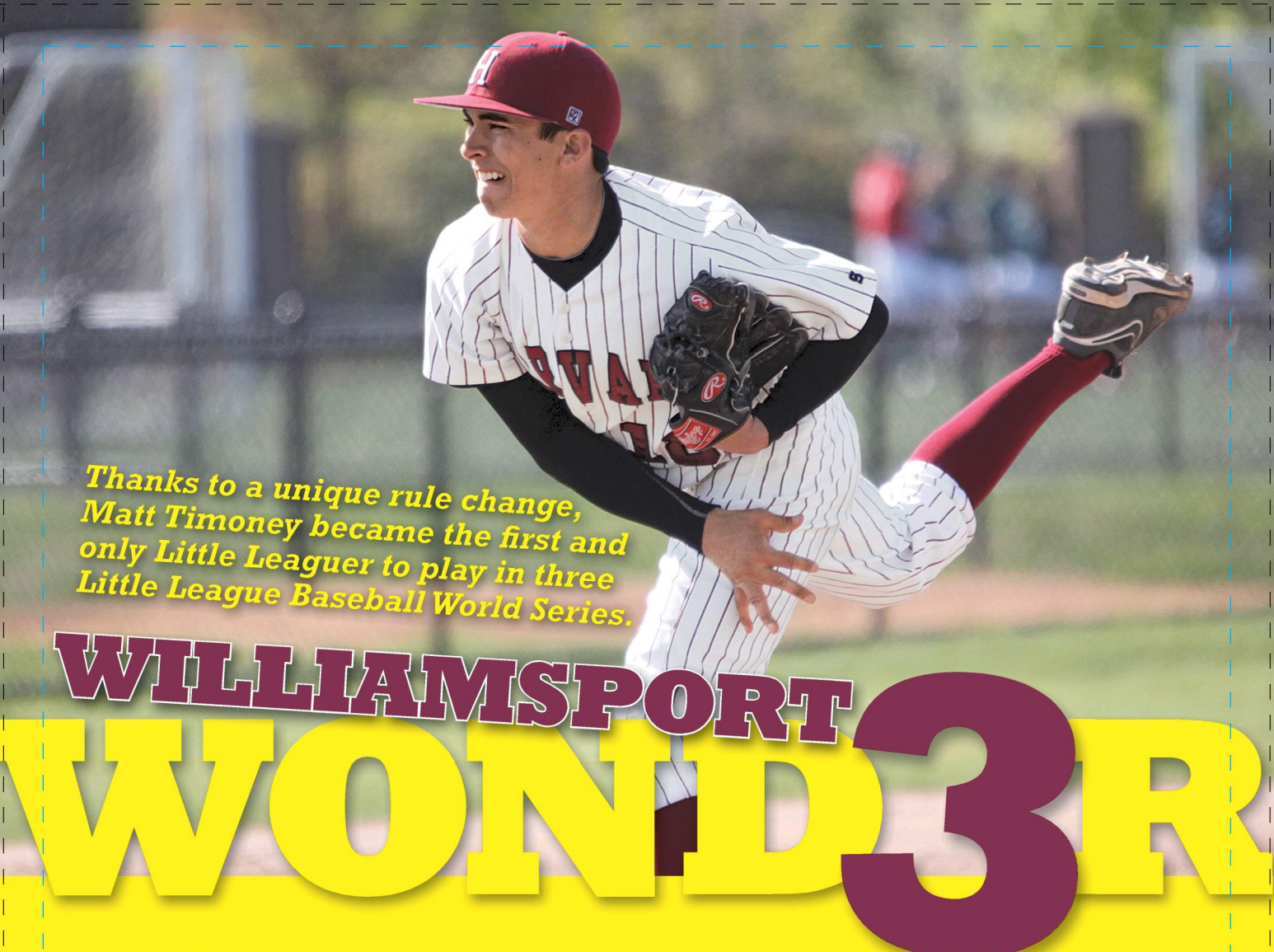
FEELING RIGHT AT HOME

MANAGER ANA SANTIAGO TOLD HER ASIA-PACIFIC Big League Softball team to play like champions. "We traveled 8,000 miles to get here because we wanted to be recognized. We wanted to be proud — Filipino proud," she said.

The squad traveled nearly 35 hours during its trek from Manila to Kalamazoo, Mich., where it was welcomed with open arms by Kalamazoo's Filipino-American community, whose members have housed and fed players in the tournament for years. During the live championship broadcast on ESPN2, the large, boisterous Filipino fan base could be seen cheering on their "adopted" daughters.

After emerging victorious, the players paraded their banner behind the fence that marks the furthest point of center field. They dedicated their title to the tens of thousands of Filipinos who were suffering from devastating floods back home. —Joel Welsler





Thanks to a unique rule change, Matt Timoney became the first and only Little Leaguer to play in three Little League Baseball World Series.

WILLIAMSPORT WON'D 3R

By Chris Downs

IT'S CLICHE TO SAY THE THIRD TIME is the charm. But for Matt Timoney, the only Little Leaguer to play in the Little League Baseball World Series (LLBWS) three times, he can say without a doubt that his baseball life was charmed.

"I met most of my best friends while playing Little League," says Matt, who reached Williamsport at the end of the 2004, '05 and '06 seasons. "Growing up, Little League was as much a social thing as it was an athletic thing. Most of my friends know I played in the World Series three times, but when I meet people and they find out, they think it is the coolest."

Because of a change in Little League's age determination date that went into effect before the 2006 season, for one year, children who turned 13 between May 1 and July 31 were permitted to play an additional season in the Little League

Major division. Matt was born in Dallas, Texas, on May 1, 1993. As a second-time 12-year-old player, he said, "It makes me really happy because it's me out of everybody in the world."

"A few of my friends weren't able to play because they were too old, and they knew then how lucky I was to be able to go back to the World Series," says Matt, now a pitcher at Harvard University. "I really appreciated how unique it was to play in Williamsport again."

In his first World Series appearance, Matt was a 4-foot-9, 77-pound 11-year-old. In his second trip to Williamsport, and his first as a league-age 12-year-old, he weighed in at 88 pounds and was a solid 5 feet tall. By his third trip, he had jumped another five inches and weighed a stout 109. During that last appearance, Matt got his first opportunity to pitch.

"Being able to start a World Series game [on the mound] was really special," Matt says. "Before, I was just in the field. But as awesome as that was, you can't impact the game like a pitcher can."

THE TIMONEY FAMILY is originally from Wyndmoor, Pa., and now lives near Philadelphia in Glenside. But Matt, now 19, is already an experienced world traveler, having spent his formative years in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. He was introduced to Little League through his dad's job at the Saudi Aramco Oil Company.

Matt played in the Arabian American Little League (AALL), and his father, Tom, was often his coach. Matt's dad also led the team that won the Transatlantic Region championship

in 2006 en route to his third World Series appearance.

At the time, Mr. Timoney said, “Three World Series appearances makes for a good trivia item, but what is special is the opportunity to come out here [to the World Series] and compete.”

To date, the Arabian American Little League has been represented in the Little League Baseball World Series for 11 consecutive years and has made the tournament a total of 17 times, but the team from Saudi Arabia has never played in a championship game.

“On the big stage at the Little League World Series, you learn that you can’t show your emotions on the field,” says Matt, who played catcher and shortstop in addition to pitching. “I have carried that lesson with me throughout my baseball career and it’s certainly helped me become a better college player.”

Now a right-handed reliever for the Crimson, Matt appeared in 12 games in 2012 and posted a 1-1 record. He made three starts and expects to have an opportunity to crack the starting rotation in 2013.

In Williamsport, Matt admits he did not do well statistically, but he did get better each year.

The 2004 AALL team, representing the Transatlantic Region, went 1-2, while



Normally a catcher and shortstop, Timoney took the mound in Williamsport (above) for the first time during his final appearance in the LLBWS. He used the experience as a springboard to his career at Harvard (previous page).

The Transatlantic Region champs lost, 4-1, to the eventual world champions from Japan’s Kawaguchi Little League. “Looking back on it now, it was nerve-racking,” Matt says, “but I still didn’t have a sense of the scope of the World Series.

“It helped having family there and my dad as my coach. My brother had

“Every time I went to the World Series, it was the same excitement,” Matt says. “In the first year, everything flew by. In the last year, I made a point of taking it all in. Looking into the stands and seeing the full stadium, and looking at the hill and seeing the kids sliding down on cardboard was fun for me.”

Already a passage in Little League’s lore, Matt’s special story will soon be available for all to enjoy, as he and his family have graciously loaned items from his LLBWS appearances to the Peter J. McGovern Little League Museum. The completely renovated museum, which will include the Timoneys’ contributions among its archives of Little League memorabilia, is scheduled to re-open in June 2013, the 74th anniversary of the first Little League baseball game.

“For the museum to include my stuff really means a lot to me and my family,” Matt says. “Making it to three World Series always seemed to be just a detail of my life, but now it’s way cool. To have a display about me in the new museum sounds awesome.” ♦

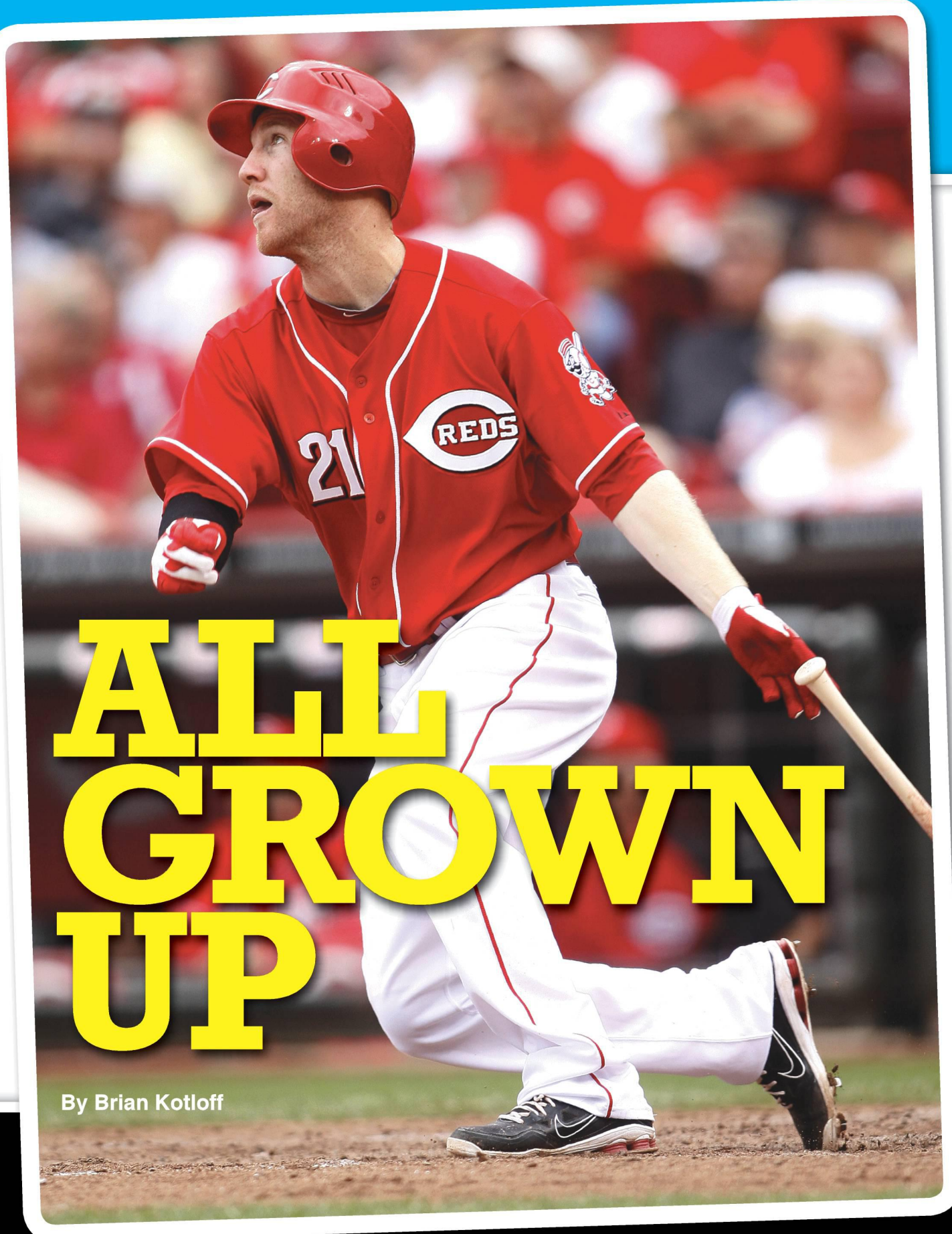
“IT MAKES ME REALLY HAPPY BECAUSE IT’S ME OUT OF EVERYBODY IN THE WORLD.”

the 2005 team lost all three of its pool play games. Matt went a combined 2 for 18 (.111) in those six games.

In 2006, though, the extra year of experience and physical growth helped Matt produce a .286 batting average (4 for 14) with a double, home run, three RBI and three runs scored in four games. Matt’s team also improved, finishing with a 2-1 record in pool play and advancing to the International semi-final.

been there before, too, and gave me a lot of advice, and I had family from all over at the games. It wasn’t so much about me playing baseball, but more about getting the family together.”

MATT’S FONDEST MEMORY was hitting a home run at Little League Volunteer Stadium in a 5-0 win against Canada during the World Series’ 60th anniversary season in 2006.



ALL GROWN UP

By Brian Kotloff

MLB's Little League Baseball World Series graduates couldn't have predicted where their experiences would take them.

Toms River swaggered way to title

Associated Press, Aug. 30, 1998:

"I thought we had it in us," Todd Frazier said after the New Jersey team beat Kashima, Japan, 12-9, Saturday to win its first Series.

"Don't lie, Todd," Manager Mike Gaynor broke in with a grin.

"I did!" Frazier insisted.

Picture a Major Leaguer during his time in Little League, and you'll likely come up with an image resembling Todd Frazier and his unforgettable 1998 Toms River team.

They were the pint-sized preteens from the idyllic New Jersey suburb; the close-knit 12-year-olds who liked to do 12-year-old things, like adopt a stuffed gorilla as their mascot and bark "Who Let the Dogs Out?" before games. "Irresistible," the *New York Daily News* called them.

Frazier was their freckled-faced talent, with a grin full of braces. Even

on a team hailed for its "one-for-all spirit," eyes magnetically turned to the team's scrawny shortstop, pitcher and leadoff hitter. "He was a runt of a 12-year-old," recalls Manager Mike Gaynor. "But he had all the goods."

Frazier hit 15 homers during Toms River's tournament run, nearly as many as he launched for the Cincinnati Reds in 2012 (19). In the title game, he went 4 for 4 at the plate and struck out the final Japanese batter, creating an indelible memory for his hometown. "Everybody plays baseball back home," Frazier says more than a decade later. "So mostly everybody knows [about that strikeout]. Once in a while, they'll bring it up."

It will be hard to forget, now that Toms River Little League's indoor facility has been renamed the Frazier Field House. But no matter how many Big League bombs he hits, Frazier did not earn local hero status because of supernatural ability, says Gaynor, now a Toms River realtor. Instead, his passion for the game and baseball smarts stood

out. And "growing up to be 6 foot 3, 215 pounds certainly didn't hurt his chances," adds Gaynor, chuckling.

MLB players of all sizes have a history of turning heads as 12-year-olds. Lastings Milledge, who played six years in the Bigs (2005–11), was so dominant for his youth all-star team that opponents eventually refused to pitch to him unless the natural righty batted lefty; he still hit .795. "Legendary Lloyd" McClendon, an MLB utility player from 1987–94, got just five at-bats in the '71 LLBWS because teams preferred to walk him; he homered in each of them. The latest player to make the leap after a September 2012 call-up, Rangers infielder Jurickson Profar struck out 45 batters in 25.1 LLBWS innings on the mound.

While the list of 40 LLBWS-to-MLB players is filled with childhood stars, not all of them showcased advanced skills once they got to Williamsport. Milledge went 3 for 11 in the '97 Little League Baseball World Series. Former Red Sox great Jason Varitek went 0 for 7 in '84.

Frazier, Toms River LL, 1998



Profar, 2012 All-Star Futures Game



CHAMPIONS SWING

Louisville Slugger®

THE OFFICIAL BAT OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL.®

SWING SLUGGER'S BRAND NEW TWO-PIECE COMPOSITE BAT



slugger.com

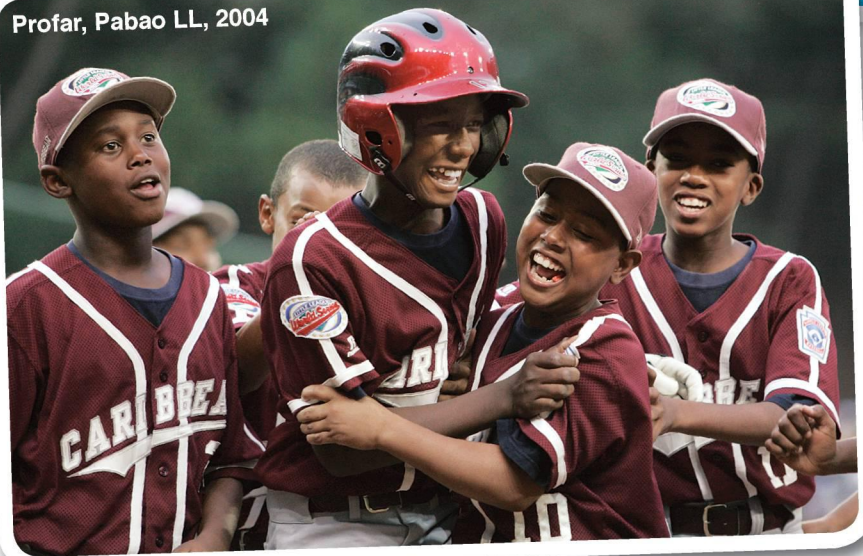


POSEY / LONGORIA / JETER
VOTTO / HAMILTON / WRIGHT

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL TRADEMARKS AND COPYRIGHTS ARE USED WITH PERMISSION OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PROPERTIES, INC. VISIT MLB.COM

ALL GROWN UP

Profar, Pabao LL, 2004



“It was the greatest feeling.” —Profar on winning the 2004 LLBWS

Yes, even for some of the Little Leaguers who went on to live the Big League dream, Williamsport provided not a shining moment, but a fleeting one.

South Central comes up short in World Series

Idaho Statesman, Aug. 25, 1999:

That last batter was second baseman Stephen Fife. “Hey, why not? Just drive it!” one parent yelled.

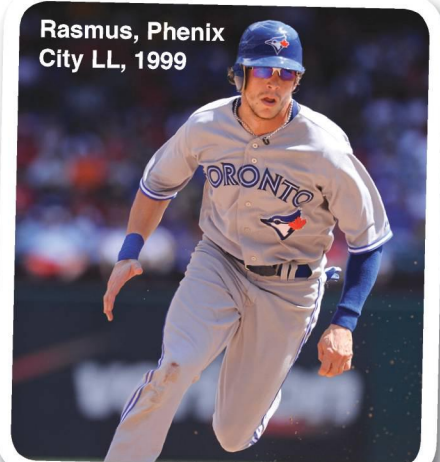
“Yeah, chicks dig the longball, buddy!” another chirped in.

Fife gave the smallest hint of a smile, then surrendered an easy ground ball to the pitcher.

Stephen Fife the Major Leaguer laughs at Stephen Fife the Little Leaguer. At 26, Fife is a 6-foot-3, 220-pound pitcher with hopes of earning a spot on the Los Angeles Dodgers. At 12, he was the 5-foot-4, 119-pound No. 9 hitter for the only team from Idaho ever to reach Williamsport.

“There’s no chance that anybody would have ever looked at me and said, ‘That kid’s a Major Leaguer,’” says Fife,

Rasmus, Phenix City LL, 1999



who went 0 for 3 in the '99 LLBWS. “In fact, out of the 11 players on our roster, I was probably the ninth most likely.”

He is a reminder that careers are not made during Little League; they are built over time, through growth spurts and lucky breaks. It took the summer of '99 for him to appreciate the possibilities that could come from committing to baseball.

It took a broken thumb four years later for him to discover how he could reach those possibilities. Bored with his regular

RICH PILLING/MLB PHOTOS (PROFAR LITTLE LEAGUE); JOHN WILLIAMSON/MLB PHOTOS

ALL GROWN UP

rehab as a sophomore third baseman, Fife hopped on the mound and took aim at a chair behind home plate, unaware that the Borah High pitching coach was watching. He broke a beautiful curveball into the target. “Do it again,” the coach told Fife. He did. “You’re a pitcher.”

As Fife pitched his way through the University of Utah and the Red Sox’s farm system, Williamsport followed him. Colby Rasmus, the Phenix City (Ala.) phenom from the team that eliminated Boise in ’99, popped up in newspapers during high school, as a first-round prospect for the 2005 MLB Draft. “Dude, we played against that guy. How crazy is that?” Fife told his friends. Lance Lynn, the 5-foot-9, 170-pound Brownsburg (Ind.) ace, appeared on TV during the ’09 World Series. “Dang, that kid’s from Indiana,” thought Fife, fresh off his second season in Single-A.

Three Minor League seasons, a trade to L.A. and 26.2 Big League innings later, a handful of his Little League teammates still come to an annual reunion that Fife hosts, when they “get together and reminisce on old times.”

The memories take them through San Bernardino, Calif., where they followed a West Region victory with their first autograph session, and Williamsport, where they drowned their

disappointment in ice cream after an opening-game loss that led to a 1-2 finish. Back in Boise, hundreds greeted them at the airport, and the next afternoon, on the first day of seventh grade, they skipped lunch to attend a celebration in their honor downtown.

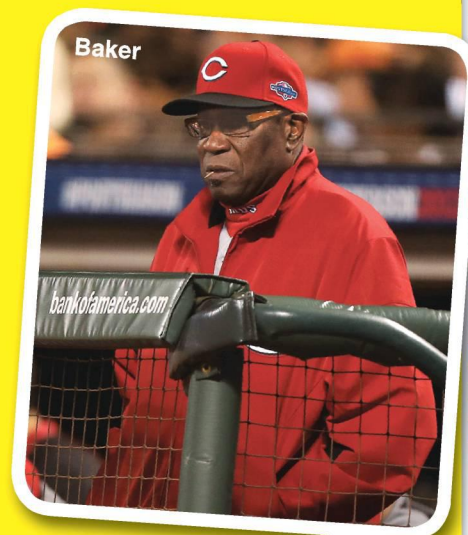
Perhaps no LLBWS-to-MLB player has a better perspective on the two experiences than the unlikelyst of them all. Fife describes reaching Williamsport as a blur: one round, then the next, then a red-eye trip into unknown territory and, before his brain could make sense of it all, nationally televised games.

“We had no idea of the impact we were making,” he explains.

He describes reaching the Bigs as the opposite: a wave of thoughts, about a lifetime of experiences that somehow led to this one, crashing instantaneously in his mind. Even the summer of ’99 couldn’t prepare Fife for July 17, 2012, when he took the mound at Dodger Stadium for the first time.

“You can dream it up as big as you want,” he says, “but when you actually get to that point, and you step on a Major League field wearing a Major League uniform, you can’t fathom it.” ♦

Brian Kotloff is a project assistant editor for Major League Baseball Properties.



DUST OFF AND TRY AGAIN

IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR TODD Frazier to top the career his Big League manager, Dusty Baker, put together from 1968–86. But even if he never matches Baker’s 242 homers or 1,013 RBI, Frazier will always have one leg up on his skipper. Johnnie B. “Dusty” Baker Jr. from the Riverside (Calif.) Lions Little League never made it to Williamsport.

In fact, although he would eventually be enshrined in the Little League Museum’s Hall of Excellence in 2007, Baker was cut by his coach, who happened to be his father, three times before reaching the Majors division at age 11. But he needed to endure the tough-love lessons before he could grow into one of the game’s greatest leaders.

“The hours you put into Little League help to develop a sense of commitment and dedication for whatever you do,” Baker, who has assisted the Positive Coaching Alliance and Little League’s Urban Initiative, told LittleLeague.org before his induction. “Dad realized he did the right thing by cutting me. He said, ‘It’s like when you invest: You don’t know until later if it was a good deal or not.’ For me, the lessons I learned in Little League were a good investment and set the foundation for the rest of my life.” —BK



FOR LOVE OF

Women's College World Series stars cherish their Little League days.

THE GAME

By Lauren Gilbert

MLB NETWORK HOST BOB COSTAS

once said, "The best thing about sports is the sense of community and shared emotion." Little League Baseball and Softball, especially, thrive on the bonds formed each year by children around the globe.

Louisiana State University's Rachele Fico, the University of Alabama's Jaclyn Traina and Ryan Iamurri, the University of Tennessee's Raven Chavanne and the University of South Florida's Stephanie Medina are all Little League graduates, NCAA Division I softball standouts and embodiments of Costas's sentiment.

"Little League was where I first fell in love with the game," says Fico, whose father signed her up at age 5. "It was the first stepping stone in my career.

"Playing Division I softball and making it to the College World Series is something I dreamed about since I was a kid. Little League definitely shaped me into the player I am today."

Fico played in the Oxford (Conn.) Little League Softball program between the ages of 5 and 10. She later played in the 2007 Big League World Series for the East Region champions.

Alabama infielder Iamurri and ace Traina have been teammates since age 6 and played in both the Little League Softball World Series and Junior League Softball World Series. "We've been through so much together," Iamurri says. "We've made it through failure and adversity, and we triumphed."

The two grew up playing in the Naples (Fla.) Girls Softball Little League,



and despite some tough losses, claimed a Florida Little League state title and a high school state title and most recently a 2012 NCAA Division I College World Series championship. In 2006, the pair traveled to Seattle, where their team won the Junior League Softball World Series behind Traina's dominant one-hit shutout.

"My favorite part of that trip was the camaraderie," says Iamurri. "My dad — our coach — taught us the discipline, focus and poise we would need to be successful in life. We were growing up into confident, intelligent young women."

Tennessee's All-American Chavanne may not have played with any other girls in Little League, but she certainly didn't let the competition intimidate her. "I played Little League Baseball for one year," she says. "I was the only girl on my team, but I still had fun."

Chavanne's hometown of Thousand Oaks, Calif., did not offer Little League Softball, which was unfortunate for the boys who, as a result, were repeatedly outplayed by a girl in weekly practices.

"We would have competitions of who could throw or hit the ball the farthest," Chavanne says. "It was really fun and I would win a lot, which was cool."

After that year, Chavanne switched over to the town's recreational softball league. "At the end of the day, I play softball because I love it, which is the same feeling I had when I was 5 years old," she says.

USF first baseman Medina had an equally great experience during her five-year stint in the Citrus Little League organization in Tampa, Fla.

"Little League was a really fun experience. It was carefree and everyone had a good time," she says. "My favorite part was playing in All-Star tournaments and making new friends."

Medina added that she grew up playing softball with several of her current and past college teammates — an awesome experience to be able to share with lifelong friends. ♦

Lauren Gilbert was a volunteer staff writer at the 2012 LLBWS.

When I was a kid ...



CARLOS GONZALEZ
Outfield
Colorado Rockies

Playing in Little League is the best time you're ever going to have in baseball. When you're young, you just go out on the field and try to play your best for no reason other than to have fun. Playing in Little League gave me some of the greatest times in my life.

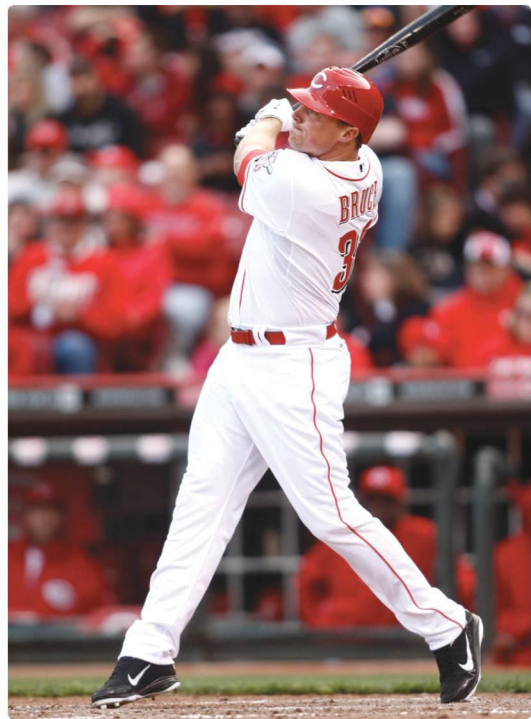
I was really close to going to Williamsport when I was 12 years old. Then I had the opportunity to play in the Senior League Baseball World Series against Troy Tulowitzki in 2001. It was a fun experience. I had the chance to represent my home of Venezuela, so it was a blessing. It was my first time coming to the United States, and nothing compared to that. When you're playing in a World Series against guys from different countries — like the United States, Korea and Japan — it's like you're playing in the Big Leagues; there's nothing more special than that.

I know being in the Little League World Series is a dream for every single kid. It was a dream for me, too. Little League was so much fun, and I think what kids need to do is just enjoy the game and play it the right way.

JAY BRUCE
Outfield
Cincinnati Reds

I used to love going to play ball. My Little League team won Districts and went to Sectionals one time, but we never made it any further.

But even outside of Little League, I would go to the ballpark during the summer and play pick-up sandlot baseball with all of my friends. I was the youngest one, so I was always there with my baseball pants on, ready to go. Those kids laughed at me, but we had a good time together. I loved just going out there and hitting the ball around without a care in the world.



ADAM DUNN
Designated Hitter
Chicago White Sox

When I was growing up, we played every sport. Now, it's so specialized. People say that if you play football, you can't play baseball; if you play basketball, you can't play football. I would say play 'em all. Don't let anyone tell you that you can only play one sport.

I was an All-Star catcher in Tee Ball. I started pitching the next year. In Little League, I broke my first car window with a home run when I was about 8 or 9. That was pretty cool.

Growing up, my favorite player was Larry Walker. I also liked Alan Ashby because I lived in Houston and he was my favorite Astro.



CHRIS IANNETTA
Catcher
Los Angeles Angels
of Anaheim

My Little League team in North Providence, R.I., won Districts when I was 12 years old and I felt like we won the World Series.

After our games, I always got a hot dog and a soda like everybody else.

If we won a big game, there was usually pizza or a pool party or cookout, so that was always a fond memory.

I was a pitcher and a catcher. I started catching seriously early on. I was with our coach, a good family friend, when our catcher broke his wrist. I was playing third base, and he was like, "You look like a catcher. Why don't you go back there?"

I hated it at first, but after a few weeks I realized that I was always in the game. I liked picking off runners, throwing guys out and blocking balls, so it was fun. It became serious for me right away. ♦



RAVEN CHAVANNE ON **CONTACT HITTING**



University of Tennessee outfielder/third baseman Raven Chavanne was a right-handed power hitter in Little League. But years later, she realized that she could utilize her blazing speed by drag bunting and slap-hitting from the left side of the plate, techniques that have become widespread in softball. Thanks to an amazing ability to put her bat on the ball — she struck out just six times in 187 at-bats in 2012 — Chavanne hit a combined .444 with 102 stolen bases during her first three collegiate seasons. Here are her tips for making consistent contact:



SLAP HAPPY

The first thing to do when you're slap-hitting is read the defense. Keep it simple. You're going to try to hit the ball either soft or hard. If you see the defense playing back, you should think about bunting or hitting it softly to the infield. If they're playing you in because they're expecting that, then you can try to slap it past them.

FIND YOUR PITCH

Know your pitch and jump on it. My goal at the plate is to not get behind in the count and jump on the pitch I feel like I can hit, even if it isn't necessarily a strike. It's about looking for your pitch and not letting it go by. When you swing, keep your eye on the ball and bring your hands toward it.

MIND GAMES

Before the game even starts, you need to know what type of pitcher you're facing and have a plan of attack for every pitch she throws. When I'm going up to bat, I have different tools that I can use against the pitcher. Hold yourself accountable to jump on your pitch, but don't get frustrated if you miss, because it's going to happen. If you do miss, it's not the end of the world. Get 'em next time. ♦

Fun and Games



BRETT

WORD SEARCH

Not everyone who plays Little League makes it big, but even the most famous MLB players had to get their starts somewhere. Below are just some of the Hall of Famers who played Little League as kids. Their names can be found in all directions: up, down, backward, forward and diagonally. See how many you can spot!

- (Wade) **BOGGS**
- (George) **BRETT**
- (Steve) **CARLTON**
- (Gary) **CARTER**
- (Rollie) **FINGERS**
- (Catfish) **HUNTER**
- (Cal) **RIPKEN**
- (Nolan) **RYAN**
- (Mike) **SCHMIDT**
- (Robin) **YOUNT**

I	P	B	S	L	Y	D	R	S	E	J	A
E	H	V	R	E	T	N	U	H	P	D	U
T	A	M	E	B	H	S	A	Z	G	T	M
R	W	G	G	R	S	F	A	Y	H	C	L
I	C	P	N	J	A	E	Q	K	R	V	I
P	S	E	I	N	X	C	W	E	E	B	Q
K	Q	B	F	I	D	Y	T	N	U	O	Y
E	F	T	K	A	U	R	N	B	F	G	R
N	O	T	L	R	A	C	H	T	L	G	D
M	U	E	S	C	H	M	I	D	T	S	G
A	J	R	R	G	S	T	L	Q	C	R	K
L	I	B	C	P	E	O	A	F	I	B	O



UNSCRAMBLE

Can you unscramble the names of the following people who are enshrined in the Little League Museum's Hall of Excellence?

1. IDCK IAEVTV

HINT: This man is best known as one of college basketball's top analysts.

2. EJO INDEB

HINT: He is the second Little League grad to become Vice President of the United States.

3. UTSDY AKRBE

HINT: This Reds manager won a World Series while playing with the Dodgers in 1981.

4. MOT EEAVRS

HINT: This former Little Leaguer won three Cy Young Awards.

5. IMJ ALPMRE

HINT: This Hall of Fame starting pitcher dazzled for the Orioles from 1965–84.

6. OEREGG W. SHUB

HINT: This former U.S. President played Little League in Texas, where he was later the governor.

7. MEERKA DULBA-BBAARJ

HINT: This Basketball Hall of Famer and one-time Little Leaguer is the NBA's all-time leading scorer.

8. ONTY YUNGD

HINT: This former Indianapolis Colts head coach grew up playing Little League in Michigan.

MIX 'N' MATCH

Match the stat with the player who ranked first in that category in the Big Leagues in 2012.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Batting average | A. Jim Johnson |
| 2. Runs scored | B. Miguel Cabrera |
| 3. Hits | C. Derek Jeter |
| 4. Walks | D. Adam Dunn |
| 5. Home runs | E. Felix Hernandez |
| 6. Doubles | F. Justin Verlander |
| 7. ERA | G. Mike Trout |
| 8. Strikeouts | H. Clayton Kershaw |
| 9. Saves | I. Buster Posey |
| 10. Shutouts | J. Alex Gordon |



JETER

RICH PULLING/MLB PHOTOS (MUSEUM); ROB TRINGALI/MLB PHOTOS

Fun and Games



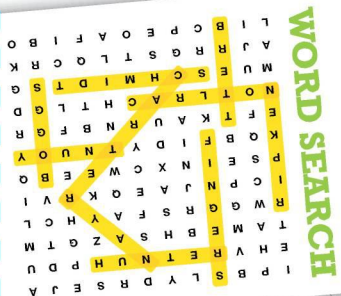
YOU MAKE THE CALL

1. You're the batter. There are two outs and a runner on first base. You have a 2-2 count when your teammate gets thrown out trying to steal second, ending the inning in the middle of your at-bat. What's the call?

- a. The person after you in the batting order leads off the next inning.
- b. That at-bat doesn't count and you lead off the next inning with your count reset.
- c. You flip a coin with the teammate that follows you in the order to see who leads off the next inning.

2. You're at bat with the score tied and the bases loaded. The first pitch you see grazes your jersey, but doesn't hit your body while you were in a legal batting position. What's the call?

- a. A hit-by-pitch is called if it hits your body or clothing, so you take a base and force in the go-ahead run.
- b. You weren't technically hit by the pitch, so the count is 1-0 and the at-bat resumes.
- c. The pitch doesn't count since it didn't hit you, but the ball was impossible to hit so the count remains 0-0.



WORD SEARCH

ANSWERS

- UNSCRAMBLE**
 1. Dick Vitale; 2. Joe Biden;
 3. Dusty Baker; 4. Tom Seaver;
 5. Jim Palmer; 6. George W.
 Bush; 7. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar;
 8. Tony Dunny
- MIX 'n' MATCH**
 1. I; 2. G; 3. C; 4. D; 5. B; 6. J;
 7. H; 8. F; 9. A; 10. E
- YOU MAKE THE CALL**
 1. B; 2. A



ROB CARRIGETY IMAGES (GAME); HUNTER MARTIN/MLB PHOTOS



Do you want to attend the 2013 LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP GAME?

Tickets to the Little League Baseball World Series, like all Little League games, are free. But even if you don't have a seat in the stands, you can still see the World Series Championship Game in person from the terraced hills at Lamade Stadium in South Williamsport, Pa., where tickets are never required. All you need to do is find a place on the hill where you can park your stuff and watch. You may want to bring a blanket or lawn chairs. Come join us!

COURTESY LITTLE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL