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GAME ON!

The Monthly Newsletter of the Palm Beach County Sports Commission



Feature Story

Solid Summer for Sports Commission (inside cover)

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REVIVING BASEBALL IN INNER CITIES WORLD SERIES

Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) presented by KPMG, is once again holding its World Series in Palm Beach County, August 3-14. This baseball/softball program, which begins in late July, holds numerous tournaments throughout the summer for boys and girls, ages 13-18, all leading up to the anticipated final games of the RBI World Series at Roger Dean Stadium.

The youth get a little more out of the program than just playing baseball or softball. RBI focuses not only on the sport but also helps children prepare for college, encourages academic participation, promotes inclusion of minorities into the game, and the value of teamwork.

Going into its 21st year of play, 170 RBI participants have been drafted into Major League Baseball. A few of the draftees include: Covelli "Coco" Crisp (Royals), James Loney (Dodgers), Jimmy Rollins (Phillies) and CC Sabathia (Yankees), among others.

RBI was first developed in 1989 by John Young, a former baseball scout and major league player. He began to notice that fewer youth had interest in baseball and smaller amounts of players were being drafted from inner cities. He started up the RBI program to get

children interested in America's favorite past time once again and to encourage academic excellence. RBI consists of five divisions: Freshman Boys (13-14), Junior Boys (15-16), Senior Boys (17-18), Girls Softball (14 & under) and Girls Softball (18 & under). In 2009, RBI launched its newest expansion, Jr. RBI, for youth ages 5-12. They are now able to provide even younger children the same academic and playing opportunities. RBI has grown to more than 200 cities worldwide, providing 120,000 boys and girls the chance to become part of a program that promotes their well-being. John Young, the "father of RBI," is truly amazed at the achievements RBI has made over the years and has continued to watch it grow from afar since MLB took over administration in 1991.

In 2007, the RBI for RBI Scholarship Fund was created by Major League Baseball Charities, Inc. and KPMG. This gives RBI participants who wish to further their education financial assistance opportunities. In addition to the \$500,000 already given to the fund, MLB Charities and KPMG will donate \$1 annually for each Run Batted In (RBI).



Continued on next page

REVIVING BASEBALL IN INNER CITIES WORLD SERIES (CONTINUED)

All 30 MLB Clubs have supported the RBI program, including the Florida Marlins. The Marlins have given great support to RBI over the years and were honored that South Florida was chosen for the World Series again this year. Over 45 teams and 900 baseball and softball players ranging from ages 6-18 are in the Marlins RBI program. The Marlins have been RBI members since 1993 and have had three RBI World Series Champions, most recently the Boy's Senior team in 2004. RBI is a great opportunity for the youth in the South Florida area. "It's a great experience for them...they don't get out of their communities often. This allows them to travel to different areas, play on nice fields and stay in nice hotels," says Juan Garciga, the Marlin's RBI Director and former RBI player, "It's great to see their faces."

This year's World Series, taking place in Palm Beach County at Roger Dean Stadium and the Lake Catherine Sports Complex, will host a number of teams from all over the United States such as Hawaii, California, Texas, and Massachusetts, as well as, islands in the Caribbean. From the eight regional tournaments three teams (one from each division, Boys Baseball 18U & 15U and Girls Softball) will continue on to the World Series. The teams and coaches will stay at the Palm Beach Gardens Marriott, while family and fans stay at the Hilton Garden Inn Palm Beach Gardens. Garciga says the separation keeps teams focused on the tournament without too many distractions.

The RBI World Series has a huge economic impact on Palm Beach County. Not only are teams coming from across the nation, but the tournament is televised on MLB network giving great exposure to the facilities and amenities that Palm Beach County has to offer. It is safe to say that with the number of teams and their families, the estimated hotel room nights are close to 500. This is the second consecutive year that the World Series has been held in sunny Florida; let's hope the beaches and warm weather keep them returning for years to come.



GEARING UP FOR GROZA



The highly anticipated kick-off to college football season is only weeks away. Just as the season begins with the toss of a coin and a swing of the leg, the Palm Beach County Sports Commission will be gearing up for the 2010 Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker of the Year Award.

In 1992, The Palm Beach County Sports Commission established the Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker of the Year Award. This award, presented by the Orange Bowl Committee, is given annually to the nation's top collegiate place-kicker as determined by a voting panel of Division 1 head coaches, national sports writers and sportscasters, conference representatives, professional kickers and previous winners. The Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker Award has become the most prestigious college football award for kickers. Past Groza finalists include current and former NFL kickers, Nate Kaeding, Sebastian Janikowski, Mike Nugent, Martin Gramatica, Jason Elam and Mason Crosby.

The pre-season watch list of 30 kickers will be unveiled on August 20. Of note, the 2009 recipient, Kai Forbath, will be returning for his senior season. Additionally, twelve semi-finalists from 2009 will be returning. The roster includes: Wes Byrum—Auburn, Stefan Demos—Northwestern, Alan Gendreau—Middle Tennessee State, Kevin Goessling—Fresno State, Alex Henery—Nebraska, Spencer Lanning—South Carolina, Joe Phillips—Utah, Robert Randolph—Virginia, Grant Ressel—Missouri, Will Snyderwine—Duke, Caleb Sturgis—Florida, Nick Tausch—Notre Dame and Blair Walsh—Georgia.

Be sure to follow LouGrozaAward.com all season where you will see the release of "Stars of the Week", leading up to the announcement of the top 20 semi-finalists followed by the three finalists. The season-long watch culminates as the three finalists are invited to Palm Beach County after the end of the college season for the Annual Lou Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker Award Banquet. The winner will be announced on the nationally televised, live broadcast Home Depot ESPNU College Football Awards Show from Orlando, FL on the evening of December 9, 2010.

Feature Story : SOLID SUMMER FOR SPORTS COMMISSION

Back to back events have kept things lively at the Palm Beach County Sports Commission this summer. In a matter of 27 days, the Sports Commission hosted four events which collectively generated an estimated 15,125 hotel room nights; an estimated \$9,936,820 in economic impact; 16,600 local, state, national and international participants and utilized seven Palm Beach County venues. These events include USA Baseball 16U Championships, American Youth Soccer Organization National Games, United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) State Fastpitch Softball Championships and the annual Kids Fitness Festival of the Palm Beaches.

For the 10th Consecutive year, USA Baseball 16U Championships were hosted in Palm Beach County. Between June 19 and June 26, a total of 264 games were played at Roger Dean Stadium and Santaluces Athletic Complex with the presence of 72 teams and 3,200 athletes, coaches, umpires and spectators. This event is considered the most prestigious baseball tournament in the nation for the 15 & 16 year old age group. USA Baseball uses this tournament as an exclusive selection vehicle for its Youth National Team Trials.



The American Youth Soccer Organization National Games had never been held in Florida, let alone anywhere in the Southeast, until Palm Beach County had the honor of hosting

the tournament, July 4-11, 2010 at the International Polo Club where 563 games were played. Of the 220 participating teams, 196 came from out of state and from places as far away as California, Hawaii, the US Virgin Islands, Canada, and Trinidad and Tobago. With over 8,000 participants, this was the largest amateur sporting event hosted in Palm Beach County since the National Hockey Festival in 2005.

The USSSA State Fastpitch Softball Championships took place July 9-11 at Seminoles Palm Park, John Prince Park and Okeehetee Park. This tournament included top skill level teams competing in a variety of age divisions ranging from 8 & Under to 18 & Under. The tournament was comprised



of 67 teams, playing a total of 189 games on 12 softball fields. Participating teams had the eligibility to earn a berth to the USSSA World Series. This marks the first time the USSSA State Championships were held in Palm Beach County.

On July 14-15, over 4,000 youth participated in the 2010 Kids Fitness Festival of the Palm Beaches, presented by Ronald McDonald House Charities. The Festival included a variety of sports, such as football, baseball, basketball, golf, badminton, equestrian, fencing and boxing. The 2010 Kids Fitness Festival of the Palm Beaches featured over 45 sport clinics and activities including an interactive midway, sport personalities and mascots, and exhibitors promoting fitness and healthy lifestyles. In its 16 years of operation, the Festival has transformed from the early days at William T. Dwyer High School to utilizing well over 100,000 square feet of floor space at the Palm Beach County Convention Center.



In a short period of time, these events exemplify the driving force of what the Sports Commission accomplishes year round through the objective of its mission: Attract sporting events and other sports-related activities to Palm Beach County to enhance occupancy of hotel room nights, to maximize the positive economic impact of these events and activities on the Palm Beach County economy, and to utilize the events and activities to promote the image of Palm Beach County as a tourist destination on a national and international level.

DELRAY BEACH TENNIS CENTER HOSTS BOYS CLAY COURT CHAMPIONSHIPS

One of the most prestigious amateur tennis events took place at the Delray Beach Tennis Center on July 17-25. The highest ranked junior tennis players from around the United States came to Palm Beach County to compete in the USTA Boys 16's & 18's Clay Court Championships.

The Clay Court Championships gives the competitors a chance to be noticed by NCAA collegiate coaches at the tournament's college expo. There are 192 participants in each age division (384 total) who either play in rounds of doubles and/or singles. The winner of the 18's singles division was Bjorn Fratangelo of Pittsburg who was the number one seed before the event. He beat his opponent Alexios Halebion, Glendale, CA, 6-4, 7-5. However, Fratangelo did fall short in the 18's doubles tournament when Emmet Egger and Shane Vinsant defeated Fratangelo and Nathan Pasha, 6-0, 3-2. Fratangelo is granted a wildcard into the qualifying draw for the

ATP World Tour Event to take place at the Delray Beach Tennis Center in February 2011. This will be an opportunity for him to play with professionals and advance his tennis career. New to this year, the 16's singles winners are now awarded a wildcard for a men's future tennis event to be determined at later date. Michael Redlicki, of Hawthorne Woods, IL, was champion of the 16's singles.

This tournament allows participants to be recognized as talented athletes, not only by college representatives but among the tennis associations as well. "[The Clay Court Championships] is free to the public and usually draws in a crowd of around 200", says Marlena Hall, media coordinator at the Delray Beach Tennis Center, "It gives them a great opportunity to play in professional tournaments." The event projected 1,000 room nights and \$1 million in economic impact for Palm Beach County.

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ADAM BRETT SWICKLE
ATTORNEY AT LAW



PALM BEACH COUNTY  SPORTS COMMISSION

1555 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd., Suite 1410
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Tel: (561) 233-3180 Fax: (561) 233-3125

WWW.PALMBEACHSPORTS.COM