



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FOUR INTERNATIONAL VENUES TO HOST FIRST ROUND OF
2009 WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC**

Rounds One and Two to Feature Double-Elimination Format

The entire opening round of the 2009 World Baseball Classic will be hosted outside the 50 United States, it was announced today at a World Baseball Classic, Inc. (WBCI) press conference in Tokyo. The second edition of the World Baseball Classic will be staged next March in Tokyo, Japan; Mexico City, Mexico; Toronto, Canada; and San Juan, Puerto Rico. The host venues for Round Two, as well as the Semi-Finals and Final, will be announced in the coming weeks.

The 2009 tournament will begin play on Thursday, March 5 with Pool A (China, Chinese Taipei, Japan and Korea) competing at the Tokyo Dome in Tokyo through Monday, March 9. From Sunday, March 8 through Thursday, March 12, Pool B (Australia, Cuba, Mexico and South Africa) will play at Foro Sol Stadium in Mexico City and Pool C (Canada, Italy, United States and Venezuela) will compete at the Rogers Centre in Toronto. Hiram Bithorn Stadium in San Juan will be home to Pool D (Dominican Republic, Netherlands, Panama and Puerto Rico) from Saturday, March 7 through Wednesday, March 11. Initial opening round team match-ups (including home and visitor designations) will be determined shortly.

"The 2009 World Baseball Classic will further demonstrate the remarkable global growth of our game," said Major League Baseball Commissioner Allan H. (Bud) Selig. "There has been incredible demand to host the games of the second World Baseball Classic, and we are pleased to have four international destinations as our first round venues. We are excited about the 2009 World Baseball Classic and look forward to next March."

WBCI also announced two changes in the competitive structure of the tournament. The 2009 World Baseball Classic will feature a double-elimination format during the first two rounds of play, as well as the introduction of cross-over Semi-Final games. The double-elimination format takes the place of the round-

robin pool-play system used in the inaugural event. For Rounds One and Two, the first two teams with two losses will be eliminated from the competition, with the two remaining teams moving on. In both rounds, teams in the final game will compete for a Pool Championship prize, as well as seeding in the following round (see tournament bracket below). The winners of each Round Two Pool will play the opposite Pool's runners-up in two single-elimination Semi-Final games. As in 2006, the winners of the Semi-Final games will advance to the one-game tournament Final to compete for the World Baseball Classic Championship.

"The best baseball players in the world are looking forward with great anticipation to playing in the 2009 World Baseball Classic," said Major League Baseball Players Association Executive Director Donald M. Fehr from New York. "Implementation of double-elimination and cross-over games to the World Baseball Classic next year will make the games even more intense, and the tournament even more exciting for both players and fans. It will be an unforgettable experience."

Dr. Harvey Schiller, President, International Baseball Federation (IBAF), said: "On behalf of the entire IBAF membership, we are excited to once again participate in this important event. The cooperation between IBAF, Major League Baseball, and the Major League Baseball Players Association is at an all time high. We all look forward to this event as a prelude to our return to the Olympic program in 2016 and beyond."

Takuo Takihana, Chairman, The Yomiuri Shimbun, remarked: "Since The Yomiuri Shimbun hosted the first US-Japan All-Star Tour in 1931, and invited Babe Ruth to Japan in 1934, we have dedicated our soul to spread this wonderful sport of baseball throughout the world. It is our great honor to be named the host of the Round One games in Tokyo once again, following 2006. With pride, as the largest selling newspaper company in the world, with a daily circulation of 10 million copies per day, we promise you to stage a supreme baseball event."

Carlos Hermosillo Conade, Minister of Sport of Mexico, said: "The government of Mexico, under President Felipe Calderón, is committed to working with the businesses of our country to bring international events like the World Baseball Classic to Mexico to demonstrate our hospitality, culture and organizing capabilities. We have worked very closely with ALHÜVA Entretenimiento, represented by the enthusiastic sports promoter Alejandro Hütt, and Mexico City is very excited to be host of Round 1 games at Foro Sol Stadium.

For the enormous baseball fan base in our country, it will be especially exciting to be able to see the Mexican National Team filled with MLB stars compete in Mexico for the first time ever.”

Paul Godfrey, President and CEO, Toronto Blue Jays and Rogers Centre, added: “This is a world class event for Rogers Centre and the City of Toronto. What better place to hold the World Baseball Classic than in a city that has such a strong international reach? The raised global profile of the tournament, along with the great performance of teams from the United States, Venezuela, Italy and our own Team Canada, will make these games most exciting as fans will see their favorite players demonstrate an unprecedented level of passion and dedication to their national teams.”

Antonio Muñoz, MB Sports Chairman of the Board, said: “Over the years, we have brought to Puerto Rico the best baseball there is, including the historic games of the inaugural World Baseball Classic. We are very proud to once again be selected to host the world’s premier international baseball tournament and expect Hiram Bithorn Stadium to be a showcase for thrilling match-ups between the Dominican Republic, the Netherlands, Panama and our home team representing Puerto Rico.”

About World Baseball Classic, Inc.

World Baseball Classic, Inc. is a company created at the direction of Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) to operate the World Baseball Classic tournament. The tournament, which is sanctioned by the International Baseball Federation (IBAF), is supported by MLB, the MLBPA, Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB), the Korea Baseball Organization (KBO), their respective players associations and other leagues and players from around the world.

About the World Baseball Classic

The World Baseball Classic is the premier international baseball tournament, sanctioned by the International Baseball Federation, and features the best players in the world competing for their home countries and territories. In March 2006, 486 players – 235 of them from MLB organizations – representing 16 teams from across the globe competed in the inaugural event. More than 740,000 fans from 48 states and 15 countries attended games and millions more watched on TV as Team Japan was crowned the first-ever World Baseball Classic Champion. Broadcast by 48 media outlets in 10 languages to 205 countries and territories around the world, the inaugural tournament had 50 official sponsors and 21 official licensees. Media members representing 25 different nations attended the 39 games in seven host venues across three countries/territories. The next tournament will be held in March 2009 and will again feature 16 of the greatest baseball-playing nations in the world. The tournament will be held every four years thereafter, with plans in place to expand the participant field beginning in 2013.

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Tournament Bracket

