



NEWS RELEASE



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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL'S 2014 OPENING SERIES SET FOR SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

2014 Opening Series Will Feature the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Los Angeles Dodgers at the Historic Sydney Cricket Ground on March 22nd & 23rd, 2014

Series Will Mark First MLB Regular Season Games to Be Staged in Australia

Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association jointly announced today that the 2014 Championship Season will begin in Sydney, Australia on March 22nd and 23rd, 2014, when the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Los Angeles Dodgers will play MLB's Opening Series at the historic Sydney Cricket Ground. The groundbreaking event was announced by the Premier of New South Wales, Barry O'Farrell, at a press conference in Sydney today, which was attended by Tom Nicholson, Director of MLB's Australia & Oceania Office, and Tim Slavin, Chief of Business Affairs and Senior Counsel for the MLBPA.

The 2014 Opening Series featuring the National League West rivals will be Major League Baseball's first regular season games to be staged in Australia. MLB has previously opened seasons in Monterrey, Mexico (1999); Tokyo, Japan (2000, 2004, 2008, 2012); and San Juan, Puerto Rico (2001).

Baseball's history in Australia goes back more than 150 years. The 2014 Opening Series will mark the 100th anniversary of exhibition games played by the Chicago White Sox and the New York Giants at the same traditional sports venue where the 2014 Opening Series will be played. The White Sox defeated the Giants, 5-4, before 10,000 fans on January 3, 1914. Major League Baseball's history at the Sydney Cricket Ground dates to December 1888, when Spalding's World Tourists played a series of exhibition games, including a December 15, 1888 contest that attracted 5,500 spectators. The Sydney Cricket Ground will be fully renovated to a baseball configuration and Major League standards in order to host MLB's 2014 Opening Series.

"Major League Baseball is thrilled that the Arizona Diamondbacks and the Los Angeles Dodgers will open our 2014 regular season in Sydney, Australia," Baseball Commissioner Allan H. (Bud) Selig said. "The globalization of our game continues to be paramount to Major League Baseball, and Australia is an essential part of our long-term efforts to grow the sport. We look forward to writing an exciting new chapter in international baseball history at the historic Sydney Cricket Ground next March."

"The players are excited about opening the 2014 season in Sydney, and they view this series as an important step in furthering their commitment to help increase the global popularity of baseball," said MLBPA Executive Director Michael Weiner. "We thank the Australian Baseball Federation and fans for welcoming us to their country. We anticipate the 2014 Opening Series in Sydney will prove to be a memorable experience for players and fans alike."

"The Dodgers are absolutely ecstatic to be opening the 2014 championship season in Sydney, one of the greatest cities in the world," Dodger President and CEO Stan Kasten said. "Our organization is committed to growing the game of baseball internationally and I'm eager to kick off our season in one of the most exciting and rapidly developing baseball markets on earth."

"We are honored that Major League Baseball selected our franchise to participate in the first-ever series in Australia," Diamondbacks President and CEO Derrick Hall said. "The Diamondbacks take great pride in promoting our brand, as well as the greatest sport, globally. Being at the forefront of spreading international goodwill on this prominent stage is a feat that we enthusiastically embrace and accept."

Both the Dodgers and the D-backs will play Spring Training games in Arizona on Sunday, March 16th before departing that evening and arriving in Sydney on the morning of Tuesday, March 18th. An evening game that will begin Major League Baseball's 2014 regular season will be scheduled for Saturday, March 22nd, followed by an afternoon game on Sunday, March 23rd. The D-backs will be considered the home Club in both games. The Australian sports marketing agency Moore Sports will act as promoter of the games.

Australia has produced 31 Major League players all-time, including 28 who were born in the country, led by 19th Century infielder Joe Quinn, whose Major League career dates back to 1884. Following Quinn with the most career Major League games among Australian-born players are former Milwaukee Brewers catcher

David Nilsson, a 1999 National League All-Star; former longtime infielder Craig Shipley, currently an assistant to D-backs general manager Kevin Towers who, as a member of the Dodgers in 1986, became the first Australian player to play in the Majors since Quinn; former lefty reliever Graeme Lloyd, a two-time World Series Champion with the New York Yankees; 10-year reliever Grant Balfour, who is currently the closer for the Oakland Athletics; and current Dodgers reliever Peter Moylan, who was called up to the Club on May 31st after seven years with the Atlanta Braves. Seven of the 28 all-time Australian-born players were born in Sydney.

Moylan is the fifth Australian-born player to wear the Dodger uniform. The first four Australian players in their history were Shipley (1986-1987); pitcher Jeff Williams (1999-2002); pitcher Luke Prokopec (2000-2001); and outfielder Trent Oeltjen (2010-2011), who made his Major League debut as a member of the D-backs in 2009. Balfour and fellow pitcher Liam Hendriks of the Minnesota Twins were the two Australian-born players on 2013 Opening Day rosters. In addition to the 34-year-old Moylan, Melbourne native Travis Blackley, a teammate of Balfour with the American League West Champion A's in 2012, now pitches for the Houston Astros.

Sydney, a city of 5.5 million people, has hosted many major international sporting events, including the 2000 Summer Olympic Games, the 2003 Rugby World Cup Final, the 2009 World Masters Games, the Bledisloe Cup in Rugby Union, the Ashes cricket test series between England and Australia as well as the annual Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.

Major League Baseball has supported the new Australian Baseball League along with the Australian Baseball Federation since 2010. The League reflects the continuation of a long-term partnership between MLB and the ABF to significantly grow the sport in Australia. The strategic alliance between the two noted sporting bodies was first formalized with the 2001 establishment of the MLB Australian Academy Program (MLBAAP), which has served as a model for ensuing international MLB Academies.

The six-team Australian Baseball League features homegrown talent, including professionals who compete in North America and Asia, and many players who hail from outside Australia, spanning as many as 12 countries in one season. The league's 40-game season runs opposite the baseball calendar in the

Northern Hemisphere – from November through January, followed by playoffs that extend to February. Following its inaugural season, a record nine Australians took the field for MLB Clubs in 2011. Outside the Olympics, the ABL All-Star Game and Championship Series had the largest television audiences ever for a baseball game played on Australian soil.

See the following page for a brief history of baseball in Australia.

MEDIA ADVISORY

Media members who may wish to cover the 2014 Opening Series should notify John Blundell (john.blundell@mlb.com) of MLB Public Relations of their potential interest as soon as possible in order to facilitate logistical estimates.

ABOUT MLB INTERNATIONAL

Major League Baseball International (MLBI) focuses on the worldwide growth of baseball and the promotion of Major League Baseball and MLB Club trademarks and copyrights through special events, broadcasting, market development, licensing and sponsorship initiatives. MLBI is committed to showcasing the world's best baseball talent through international events around the globe. Broadcast in more than 200 countries and territories, Major League Baseball game telecasts are re-transmitted in 14 different languages. MLBI executes and supports game development programs targeting players and coaches from grassroots to elite levels. With an extensive list of marketing partners worldwide, MLBI continues to grow its position as a leader in the international marketplace. MLBI is supported in its mission through presences in Beijing, New York, London, Sydney and Tokyo.

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Below is a brief history of baseball in Australia:

Getting baseball's foot in the door of Australia's strong cricket culture took some time during the mid-19th Century. The first recorded games were a series of three between Collingwood and Richmond in the Melbourne area around 1857. Collingwood won the second match 350-230 in a series in which each base obtained counted as a run scored as well as a number of other obscure rules. Two decades later, New South Wales played its first official baseball match between members of the Surrey Cricket Club, calling themselves the "Surrey Baseball Club" for the occasion.

St. Kilda Baseball Club became the first Australian club, formed in 1879 in Melbourne. The sport gradually generated more interest with a great deal of assistance from expatriate Americans. An Australian representative baseball team made its first tour of the United States in 1897, and the voyage was made by ship with required stops in New Zealand, Samoa and Honolulu before finally arriving in San Francisco.

Visits by the New York Giants and the Chicago White Sox in the early 20th Century helped interest in baseball continue to grow. The concept for the first national competition in 1934 – known as the Claxton Shield – was the brainchild of Norrie Claxton. Claxton was a successful Australian Rules footballer, cricketer, basketball player, cyclist, track and field athlete, field hockey player and baseball player.

The 1956 Melbourne Olympics included baseball as a demonstration sport. A 225-foot (69-meter) right field fence was just one of the modifications to accommodate the fact the field was inside the athletics track, and a crowd of 114,000 saw America defeat Australia 11-5.

The Claxton Shield was replaced by the original Australian Baseball League (ABL) as the national competition in 1989. The original eight-team ABL competition included four minor league players per team from Major League organizations and lasted 10 years in what was then a harsh financial sporting climate in Australia.

In 2009, Major League Baseball and the Australian Baseball Federation (ABF) announced they were resurrecting the national baseball league with the new ABL being jointly owned by MLB (75%) and ABF (25%). Having just completed its third season, the ABL has revived a strong baseball following in Australia and provided a launch pad for young Australian talent and international players in their U.S. offseason. Twenty-one of Australia's 28-man 2009 World Baseball Classic roster players competed in the ABL during the Australian summer.

The Australian National Baseball Team has participated in all three installments of the World Baseball Classic in 2006, 2009 and 2013. The club has been managed by Jon Deeble, the Pacific Rim Scouting Coordinator of the Boston Red Sox. In their opening game in 2009, Team Australia defeated Mexico 17-7 and set a new tournament record for hits in a game with 22, including four home runs. Australia finished fifth in the 2011 IBAF Baseball World Cup. Australia's most spectacular international baseball achievement to date came in the 2004 Athens Olympics, in which Australia took the silver medal to Cuba's gold.



Australia currently has 60 players under contract with Major League organizations.