



IBAF announces groups for first round of 2009 Baseball World Cup

22-team tournament to be broken into five groups, across five European countries

(REGENSBURG, Germany) – The International Baseball Federation (IBAF) announced the make-up of the five preliminary round groups for the 2009 Baseball World Cup on Friday. The press conference was the third in a series of updates on the upcoming Baseball World Cup, which will be competed across Europe, Sept. 9-27, 2009.

Originally scheduled to be hosted by Cuba, the Baseball World Cup was moved to Europe in announcement made earlier this year. Cuba was in agreement with the IBAF on the move, as all sides continue to make efforts to grow the game of baseball in Europe.

The groups will contain four teams each, for a total of 20 teams, and the other two teams – second round hosts, Italy and Netherlands – will receive byes to the next round. The groups are as follows:

Group A Prague: Czech Republic (host), Australia, Chinese Taipei, Americas 3

Group B Barcelona: Spain (host), Cuba, South Africa, Americas 1

Group C Stockholm: Sweden (host), Korea, Canada, Americas 4

Group D Moscow: Russia (host), Japan, France/Great Britain, Americas 2

Group E Regensburg: Germany (host), USA, China, Americas 5

“Here in Europe” said IBAF Secretary General John Ostermeyer “Baseball is considered an American sport that is played also somewhere. With this effort we are trying to make it also here an international sport that is played in America”.

All teams that competed in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games automatically qualified for the 2009 Baseball World Cup. The five remaining teams from the Americas will begin qualifying competition in Venezuela in the Baseball Cup of the Americas on Sept. 26, 2008.

In the second round The Netherlands (Haarlem, Rotterdam and Amsterdam) will host the first place teams of groups B, D and E; the second place teams of group B and the first, third and fourth seeded amongst the third place teams.

Italy (various locations in the northern part of the country) will host the first place teams of groups A and C; the second place teams of groups A, C, D and E and the second seeded amongst the third place teams

Held at the Regensburg Old Town Hall, the press conference was hosted by television anchor Matthias Wolk and featured John Ostermeyer, IBAF Secretary General and IBAF Executive Committee members Martin Miller and Riccardo Fraccari, as well as the City of Regensburg's Mayor Joachim Wolbergs, the German Baseball Federation's Vice President Juergen Elsishans, and the Regensburg Club's Armin Zimmerman.

Also announced at the press conference were updates on planned improvements for Armin Wolf Arena in Regensburg, which will play host to one of the five groups in the 2009 IBAF Baseball World Cup first round competition.

On behalf of the Regensburg Legionaere Stephan Ondracek explained that the new ball park will have a 10,000 seat capacity and the whole facility will be updated to international standards, including the locker rooms, that will have direct access to the dug outs.

The project is worth 1.3 million Euros.

"Regensburg was an easy choice" said German Federation Vice President Juergen Elsinshans "They already had the best ballpark in the country and showed previously they can organize tournaments".

Added Regensburg Mayor Joachim Wolbergs: "And you forgot to mention that this is also a beautiful city, that is honored to be organizing an event together with capitals like Amsterdam, Rome, Prague, Moscow, Stockholm or Barcelona".

Regensburg, the oldest city north of the Alps, is the home town of Pope Benedict XVI

For more information on the 2009 IBAF Baseball World Cup, please visit www.ibaf.org. A countdown clock is also available at the official 2009 Baseball World Cup Web site, www.2009baseballworldcup.com.

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