



ABOUT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Major League Baseball is more than just the world's pre-eminent baseball organisation. It has become an international phenomenon. Players from more than twenty different countries flock to the USA to compete for one of the 30 Major League teams. The league features such famed clubs the *New York Yankees*, the *Boston Red Sox* and the *Los Angeles Dodgers*, which are known from Aruba to Zimbabwe. In fact, the Yankees team logo is the most recognizable in all of sports.

The League's season runs for 162 games from the last day in March to October. It's a gruelling schedule that rewards teams with the finest athletes who play together with the best chemistry. In July, **Major League Baseball's** superstars all come together to play in a single contest, the All-Star Game. Fans from across the world vote on who will start in the annual showcase, which gives players a chance to prove their abilities against the best. In October, the season climaxes with the World Series – a high-pressure event that pits the champions of the National and American Leagues. One of the world's great sports traditions, the World Series will enjoy its 98th anniversary in 2002.

Major League Baseball's leading personalities are also among the world's best-known athletes. Sammy Sosa, Derek Jeter, Mike Piazza and Alex Rodriguez all have appeal that stretches well beyond America's borders. As evidence, **Major League Baseball** games are broadcast in more than 200 countries including at least 20 nations in Europe. It is also a part of international popular culture as films like *Bull Durham*, *Field of Dreams* and *The Natural* have enjoyed theatrical releases worldwide.

Beyond running the world's top baseball league, **Major League Baseball** also works on developing the game globally and is a leading charitable organisation. **MLB** programmes such as **Play Ball!** with *Frubes* provide children in emerging baseball nations with opportunities to play the game of baseball. **Major League Baseball** has also raised money for such important causes as aiding victims of the 11 Sept. tragedy and helping inner-city youths.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL BASEBALL

Whilst baseball is considered America's national pastime, it has strong roots in a host of other countries. Professional leagues thrive in such nations as Japan, Netherlands, Taiwan and Italy. Overall, more than 100 nations play baseball. In Europe, there are currently 40-plus countries affiliated with the International Baseball Association, which estimates that nearly 40 million people participate in organised baseball around the world. **Major League Baseball** has played a central role helping grow the sport in Europe. Beyond Great Britain, MLB has developed programming throughout the continent including such countries as Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Czech Republic and Greece.

In 1992, baseball cemented its place on the world stage when it became a gold medal sport at the Olympics. Countries as varied as the United States, Cuba, Japan, Australia, South Africa, the Netherlands and Italy have competed in the Olympic tournament.