

## **Baseball Canada-Junior National Team (U18) Information**

### About /Selection Process

The Junior National Team is made up of the best high school aged (18 and under) baseball players in Canada. In 1999 the program moved to a 'year-round' format consisting of four annual trips and either a WBSC U18 Baseball World Cup or a COPABE U18 Pan American Championship / U18 World Cup qualifier. These two events occur in alternating years.

Each year, the Junior National Team season begins with the Fall Instructional League program at FITTEAM Ballpark of the Palm Beaches (West Palm Beach, Florida) in October. In March of the following year, the program resumes with Spring Training in St. Petersburg, Florida followed by Extended Spring Training in April back in West Palm Beach. In May, the team takes its annual trip to the Dominican Republic for a tour through the Dominican Summer League. Typically, each of these four trip last 10-12 days. Depending on the year, a summer trip can be added. The season concludes with a Final Selection Camp where 20 players are chosen to represent Canada at either the WBSC U18 World Cup or the COPABE 18U Pan American Championship / U18 World Cup Qualifier.

Athlete selection process begins each year at the Baseball Canada Cup where players are identified and invited to October's Fall Instructional League Camp. Players are also evaluated at certain events throughout the year including MLB scout camps, Tournament 12 in Toronto and various tournaments across the country.

\*Age eligibility for the Junior National Team states that players must not be older than 18 years of age on December 31<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year.

### Baseball Canada Cup

The Baseball Canada Cup takes place every August at a different location in Canada. The competition features the some of the best 17 and under players from each of the 10 provinces in Canada competing for a national championship. JNT coaches evaluate players and at the conclusion of this tournament some players are selected to attend the JNT Fall Instructional League Camp.

### Fall Instructional League Camp

In October, the JNT heads to West Palm Beach, FL and FITTEAM Ballpark of the Palm Beaches, the spring training home of the Houston Astros and Washington Nationals to compete in a series of games against MLB Fall Instructional League teams. The opportunity that the players have to compete against professional competition is a challenge that they would not normally see at this stage of their careers. This camp is an introduction to the JNT team for many but also serves as another opportunity to participate for the JNT for returning players. This unique opportunity also gives players insight as to what it is like being a professional baseball player and what it takes to become a professional player. Once again players are evaluated during games and at the same time exposed to playing in front of many MLB scouts and college baseball recruiters.

### Spring Training Camp

Following the off-season, the JNT program resumes with Spring Training in St. Petersburg, Florida. Daily practices and games take place at the Walter Fuller Complex (former spring training facility of the Tampa Bay Rays) in St. Pete. The majority of the games are played against professional prospects from MLB clubs. The majority of players selected for this camp participated in the Fall Instructional

League with some additions and subtractions to the roster. Players are not only showcasing themselves to JNT coaches, but are performing in front of numerous MLB scouts in advance of the annual MLB Draft along with college baseball recruiters.

### Extended Spring Training Camp

The next step in the process occurs each spring again, in Florida at FITTEAM Ballpark of the Palm Beaches. Players are selected by the JNT coaching staff to participate in a spring training camp against MLB Extended Spring Training clubs. The majority of players selected for this camp participated in Spring Training with some additions and subtractions to the roster. Players are not only showcasing themselves to JNT coaches, but are performing in front of numerous MLB scouts in advance of the June MLB draft and college baseball recruiters.

### Dominican Summer League Camp

In May, the JNT will reconvene in the Dominican Republic for the annual tour through the Dominican Summer League. The Dominican Summer League provides an eye opening experience for players both on and off the baseball field. The exposure that the players receive during their time in the Dominican is crucial for those players who are draft eligible; it serves as a time for them to showcase their abilities mere days before the MLB Draft.

### WBSC U18 World Cup or COPABE 18U Pan American Championship / U18 World Cup Qualifier

The final stage of the process is the Final Selection Camp, which eventually leads to the WBSC U18 World Cup or COPABE 18U Pan American Championship / World Cup Qualifier taking place in alternating years. Final Selection Camps will generally occur in a geographic region close to the championship location. An exhibition schedule will be established to allow the coaching staff to evaluate players for final roster decisions in a highly competitive and challenging environment. This event concludes the Junior National Team season as many players “age-out” graduating to either college or professional baseball.

### JNT Alumni

The JNT program has produced many players that have gone on to professional baseball, college baseball and players who have represented Canada at the World Baseball Classic, Olympics and other International baseball events. Some of these players include 1997 National League MVP Larry Walker, 2006 American League MVP Justin Morneau, 2004 National League Rookie of the Year Jason Bay, MLB All Stars Russell Martin and Mike Soroka, 2002 4th overall pick Adam Loewen, recently retired pitchers Ryan Dempster and Jeff Francis along with current and former pros Phillippe Aumont, John Axford, Jim Henderson, Brett Lawrie, Josh Naylor, Tyler O’Neill, James Paxton, Nick Pivetta, Jordan Romano, Michael Saunders, Cal Quantrill and Rowan Wick.