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IBA/IBACA Announce Plans to Build Baseball Academy in Nicaragua

MANAGUA, NICARAGUA (December 17, 2009) – The International Baseball Association (IBA) and its affiliate, International Baseball Academy of Central America (IBACA), will announce plans to build a state-of-the-art baseball academy in Nicaragua for promising young players at a press conference today.

“Today marks the culmination of more than a year of research and exploratory trips throughout Central America,” says Reggie Smith, IBA president and former Major League all-star outfielder. “We have toured Major League facilities in the Dominican Republic and plan to incorporate the best features into our academy.”

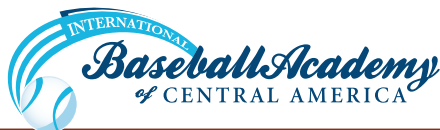
The IBA/IBACA team has selected a site for the academy that is adjacent to the Gran Pacifica Beach and Golf Resort near Villa El Carmen on the Pacific Coast. “This is the ideal location because it will afford us the opportunity to utilize Gran Pacifica Resort’s luxurious residential facilities and recreational options,” Smith explains. “We will also work closely with the Hope and Development Foundation to enhance opportunities for the local community through education, vocational training and health promotion programs.”

The academy will be constructed in multiple phases, with the initial phase including a dormitory (to house 48 players), two full baseball fields, one half-field, eight pitching mounds, batting cages, trainers’ room, locker rooms, gym/weight room, administrative offices, classrooms, and storage and maintenance areas. Groundbreaking is scheduled for early 2010. Upon completion, the academy will accommodate nearly 200 participants.

“This academy will present an incredible opportunity for young players to pursue dreams of playing professional baseball,” says IBACA president Roger B. Keeling, who is also the developer of the Milagro del Mar Beach Club within Gran Pacifica Beach and Golf Resort. “What is most important, though, is the major emphasis we’re placing on education and vocational training, in conjunction with the Hope and Development Foundation.”

Baseball instruction will be provided by American and Nicaraguan coaches, and participants will benefit from the same level of training that is offered at Major League spring training camps. Former Major League pitcher Brad Lesley, who conducted a pitching clinic in Managua in October, will supervise pitching instruction. Additional training curricula and academy facilities will be developed by Reggie Smith and former All-Star pitcher Dave Stewart. Stewart supervised the design and construction of the San Diego Padres’ first academy in the Dominican Republic.

Participants will also receive classroom instruction in English, computer skills, nutrition, humanities and business. “We want each person who matriculates through the academy to be prepared for a successful life, whether in professional baseball or non-baseball careers within Nicaragua,” says Keeling. “We all share a major commitment to improving the lives of Nicaraguans and to serving the local community with our social programs, health, education and job training. We want to be the premier model for developing youth in all phases of baseball and in life.”





IBA/IBACA board members Bob Oettinger and Joseph Ryan made five trips to Central America before recommending Nicaragua as the location for the academy.

“There were a number of factors that influenced our decision,” Ryan explains. “The passion for baseball in this country, the support we received throughout the process and the hospitality of the Nicaraguan people really overwhelmed us.”

“We are excited to see this dream come to fruition and proud to be a part of such an important project,” Oettinger adds.

About IBA and IBACA

The International Baseball Association began in California with the goal of bringing more structure to the identification and development of baseball talent in developing countries and increasing the flow of quality players into Major League Baseball from these areas. The affiliated International Baseball Academy of Central America is focused specifically on Central America’s youth baseball talent, helping players fulfill their dreams of playing in the Major Leagues.

IBACA also offers education, vocational training and employment opportunities, providing critical social and development services to facilitate the growth of these young men into responsible community role models. With this expanded program, IBACA seeks to help raise the standard of living of the surrounding community as well as of the participating players.

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