

For Immediate Release – August 6, 2024

MJBL 2024 baseball championships crown eight levels

Richmond, VA - The Metropolitan Junior Baseball League (MJBL) concluded its 33rd annual Inner City Classic national championships Sunday, August 4, defying the hazardous weather and crowning eight winning teams. All of the action followed the week's 20th Annual Bobby Bonds Memorial Symposium Tuesday, July 30, held at the Congressional Auditorium in Washington, DC hosted by Representative Jennifer McClellan (VA-04). Following the 3:00pm symposium, two games were played at nearby Howard University on the Maury Wills Field to open the competition. In the 10-under age group game, MJBL Richmond defeated the DC Grays. In a 19-under age group matchup, the Heritage Rebels of Greenville NC and Bowie Bucks from Maryland fought to a 6-6 tie on field number two.

In the eight-under division, Freedom Farm of Nassau, Bahamas and coached by Kristin Fulford slid by Bethlehem of Richmond/Henrico County, VA 2-1 to secure the title. The 10-under and 12-under age groups were hampered by rain and championships were awarded to the top seeds. The 10-under went to the MJBL Richmond team and coaches Javon Caldwell and Adrian Lightner, while the 12-under winner was Next Level of Charlotte, NC, coached by Sly Fleming.

Visions Select (Baltimore, MD) coached by Kellen Wallace defeated Greensboro (NC) 12-8 to take the 14-under title.

The Central Florida 5's coached by Noah Piard won 2-1 over Visions Select Baseball_2 (Baltimore, MD) to grab the 16-under crown.

In the 19-under division, coach Jeff Warren and his Heritage Rebels (Greenville, NC) defeated the Bowie (MD) Bucks 11-7 to win the crown.

In female softball, the 14-under division was won by the Rocky Mount (NC) Raiders and coach James West who took a 7-3 win over the USZ Angels from Philadelphia, PA.

In the 18-under softball, the USZ Angels (PA) and coach Johnny Wilson downed the Southside Chaos (Norfolk, VA) 12-8 to take the title.

The Charles “Pee Wee” Robinson Award was presented to Elijah McKinney in the 12-under and 10-under divisions. The Ken Free Most Valuable Player Classic Scholarship was awarded to Christian Chance (pitcher/third base) in the 19-under division. Chance is in class 2025 at South Central High School in Winterville NC.

The MJBL Classic week started on Capitol Hill with its symposium. Dusty Baker headlined the panel discussion along with other executives with Major League Baseball (MLB) ties. The symposium started after Howard University dropped their baseball program after their 2002 season. The discussion included Historically Black Colleges and Universities baseball programs’ role in reconnecting baseball to the Black community. Howard student Alafia Bailey, who is a member of Howard’s club baseball team, caught the audience’s attention with a plea for help to get Howard baseball back to a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) division I status. Norfolk State University baseball star Justin Jurnette was present to accept his plaque from Black College Nines as the 2024 most valuable player and Evan Smith, who will attend North Carolina A&T University this fall, inspired the audience with a \$2500 check presentation to MJBL from his nonprofit Equal Shot 4 All. He is raising money so all kids will be able to play baseball. James Williams, MJBL board member and the 2002 Howard University baseball coach, said, “MJBL has been in the forefront of developing programs and innovative initiatives to keep baseball alive in the black community. Hopefully some wealthy individuals with philanthropic ambitions like Evan will join us to bring the game back in our communities and to Howard University.”

MJBL was founded in 1966 by Dr. William M.T. Forrester, the late father of current Executive Director William “Bill” Forrester. The league was established in Richmond during segregation when Black youngsters had limited opportunities to participate in organized baseball. While open to everyone, MJBL remains the only national youth league geared towards inner-city Black athletes. Forrester recently released the book Black World Series, chronicling the amazing MJBL journey.



19U Champion Heritage Rebels Greenville, NC



14U Champion Rocky Mount Raiders and Runner Up USZ Angels
PA