



OKLAHOMA JUNIOR NATIONAL & SOPHOMORE SUNBELT CLASSIC TRY OUT ANNOUNCEMENT

THE EVENT

The Oklahoma Sunbelt Classic originated in 1977 as an all star series between the states of Oklahoma and California. The first series was played in Tulsa, Oklahoma and the series alternated between the two states for the first ten years. The founders, Coach John Schwartz and Coach Gordon Morgan of Oklahoma had dreams of the series eventually becoming a national showcase for high school baseball players.

In 1988 Florida joined the series and it became known as the Sunbelt Classic. In 1990 the states of Georgia, Ohio, and Maryland joined the series. Coach Marc Picard of Windsor, On has organized and coached an Ontario team representing Canada at the Sunbelt Classic since 1997.

The natural evolution of the series led to it being divided by age group (Sophomore-Grade 10, Junior-Grade 11 and Senior-Grade 12), which play during different times of the late Spring/Early Summer. The jewel of the series is the Junior (Grade 11) tournament, which now features all state teams from Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma(2 teams), Tennessee and Texas as well as a team from Ontario (representing Canada). Since its inception over 200 players who have participated in this event have gone on to play in the MLB. Here's a small sample:

Kevin Bass (Astros), Buddy Biancalana (Astros/Royals), Byron Buxton (Minnesota Twins), Al Davis (Mariners), Eric Plunk (A's), Randy Johnson (Mariners/Astros), Mike Moore (A's), Phil Stephenson (Cubs), Mickey Tettleton (A's/Orioles), John Russell (Phillies), Johnny Damon (Royals). Shane Monahan (Mariners), J.D. Drew (Cardinals), Tim Drew (Indians), Jeff

Francoeur(Atlanta among others), Brian McCann (Astros, Yankees, Braves), Buster Posey (Giants), Sonny Gray (A's/Yankees), John Axford (Brewers/A's/Jays) and John Roker (Braves), Mitch Moreland (Rangers/Red Sox) and Brian Dozier (Twins/Dodgers/Nationals).

The Sophomore (Grade 10) tournament has had all state teams from Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, Colorado and Canada. This tournament is an excellent stepping stone to the Junior tournament as players will get a sense of the quality of competition against which they will be competing for positions at the next level.

LOCATION

The Jr Sunbelt Series has been renamed as the Junior National Classic and takes place in the city of McAlester, Oklahoma. Located in the southeast corner of Oklahoma it is a city of approximately 20,000 people. The Sophomore Sunbelt Series takes place in Oklahoma City, OK.

DATES

The Junior tournament begins with a banquet on the evening of Thursday, June 4 and concludes with a placement game Wednesday, June 10. The Sophomore tournament begins Thursday, June 4 and concludes Sunday, June 7.

GAMES

The Junior tournament is a 10 game event. The round robin portion involves games against the 9 other teams. Depending on our placement at the end of the round robin portion, your final game will be against the team above or below you in the standings. (1 vs 2, 3 vs 4 etc.). The Sophomore tournament is a 5-6 game event depending on the team's success. The first four games are round robin games.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to participate for the Junior tournament a player must currently be in Grade 11 or lower. There is no age requirement for this tournament. To participate in the Sophomore tournament a player must currently be in Grade 10 or lower. Twenty players are selected for the Junior roster and 16-18 players are selected for the Sophomore roster. Players must be registered with a Baseball Ontario recognized program to try out.

TRANSPORTATION

All players will be responsible for their own flights. We will provide all player families with the flight arrangements of the coaches so that families may schedule itineraries in accordance with the coaching staffs.

For the Junior tournament, flights are to depart the morning of June 4 and arrive in Oklahoma City by 1:30pm. Players and coaches are then transported to McAlester. Return flights are to be scheduled for 5pm or later departing from Oklahoma City on June 10 and the players will be transported from McAllister to the Oklahoma City airport. Players are responsible for their own transportation to and from the departure airport on the 4th and the arrival airport on the 10th.

For the Sophomore tournament, players are to arrive in Oklahoma City by 2pm on Thursday, June 4th and will be picked up and transported via Van. The departing flight is to be scheduled for 5pm or later Sunday, June 7 from Oklahoma City.

MEALS

For the Junior tournament all meals while the team is in Oklahoma are provided. Meals on travel days are the responsibility of the player.

For the Sophomore tournament, players are to bring meal money. The team will eat together.

ACCOMMODATION

For the Junior tournament a unique feature is players are billeted in homes in the McAlester area. This has proven to be very popular as the billets have always treated our players exceptionally well. The Canadian players are noted for their behavior and it is very important to us that we maintain our reputation. An annual tradition of the Canadian host families is a team barbeque. In addition players are exposed to many activities that they typically do not enjoy in Canada.

For the Sophomore tournament the players will stay in a hotel, four players to a room.

UNIFORMS

Players are provided with two tops, a hat, red socks and a belt. (belt is returned to the coaching staff). Players are responsible for bringing a pair of white pants. They are free to trade any part of the uniform with players from other teams.

SCOUTING

Both events are scouted. The Junior event is heavily scouted. Schools range from SEC D1 schools to JUCOs. Some of the more notable schools which were in attendance last year included West Virginia, University of New Mexico, Bradley, Grand Canyon College and many others. Typically, between 30-50 schools scout the Junior event:

Oklahoma University, Oral Roberts University, University of Tennessee, University of Memphis, Grand Canyon University, Drury University, University of Nebraska, Kansas University, Kansas State University, University of Southern Mississippi, Missouri University, New Mexico University, Vanderbilt University, West Virginia University, Arkansas State University, Middle Tennessee State, University of Birmingham-Alabama, Crowder Junior college, Vernon College, Murray State College, Pittsburgh State University, Seminole State College, Eastern Oklahoma State College, San Diego Padres, Boston Redsox, MLB Scouting Bureau

COACHING STAFF

The Junior coaching staff will consist of Rick Johnston (Ontario Terriers and Team Canada), Dean Diconzo (Ontario Terriers), Brodie Jeffries (Laurentian Univ) and Mike Lumley (London Badgers). Additional coaches may be added prior to the tournament.

The Sophomore coaching staff will consist of Scott Robinson (former Ontario Youth Team head coach), Jeff Sharpe (Ontario Terriers), Jordan Prosper (Toronto Mets) and Ron Burke (Mississauga Majors).

Coach Marc Picard of the Windsor Selects continues to oversee the Canada Oklahoma Sunbelt program.

SELECTION PROCESS

Try outs are for players currently in Grade 11 or younger. Usually, the Junior team is made up mostly of Grade 11 players and the Sophomore team is mostly Grade 10 players with a couple of exceptional Grade 9's. There will be two initial try-outs (March 7 in London, ON and March 28 in Brampton, ON), of which a player need only attend 1. There will be a final selection camp on April 4th in Oshawa, On for the try-out participants who are called back from the initial try-outs.

The cost is \$40 to try out. Only players that pre-register and pay in advance will be admitted to try outs.

COST

These are both non-profit events. The cost to attend will be \$600 and will be required upon selection to the team. The fee does not cover meals on travel days. Players are also expected to have their own health insurance. A staff member will accompany the team and look after any player sustaining an injury or illness, which may require a visit to a hospital or clinic. A passport is also necessary.

Should you have any questions, please email ontariooklahomasunbelt@gmail.com and either Coach Picard or Coach Fascia will respond to your inquiry.