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Dominican Republic's Winter Season for Baseball Just Warming Up
See Future Baseball Stars Play during Dominican Winter Season

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – Sept. 3, 2008 – As the U.S. baseball season winds down, the Dominican Republic's (DR) annual baseball season is just warming up. Baseball is not just a sport in the DR, it's a national pastime and visitors who want to see the future stars of baseball can often find them playing in the nation's Winter League today. An easy flight from U.S. cities, this tropical island just south of Florida draws baseball enthusiasts from around the world who flock to the Winter League games played from October through January. Currently, U.S. professional baseball leagues boast more than 100 players who originated from the DR.

Celines Toribio, DR baseball sports personality and one of *People En Español* magazine's *50 Most Beautiful in 2008* said, "Baseball in the Dominican Republic is more than a sport, it's a passion reflecting the soul of the Dominican people. The distinctively Dominican experience of seeing future baseball stars play on their native soil is incomparable, especially to U.S. baseball fans. Visitors to the DR have the opportunity of a lifetime to soak up the warm Dominican sun while catching a Winter League game."

The DR Winter League consists of 50 games played during its four month run. Many U.S. professional baseball players who hail from the Dominican return home to the Winter League each year and further hone their skills. The public is welcome to witness talented players in the Winter League before they explode into household names around the world. In the post-regular season, the best teams advance to play in the annual Caribbean World Series, which the DR has won 16 times since the series began in 1949.

MORE



To Dominicans, baseball is a way of life – more than 800,000 children play organized baseball in the country. Professional baseball in the DR has evolved dramatically in its 100-year history. When the Cuban 'Ten Year War' occurred (1868-1878), Cubans fled their homeland and migrated to the DR bringing the game they nicknamed “beisbol”. The sport quickly caught on and continues to be a cultural staple. Initially consisting of only two teams, the Winter League has grown into six teams:

- La Romana:
 - Azucareros del Este (www.lostorosdeleste.com)
- Santo Domingo:
 - Tigres del Licey (www.licey.com)
 - Leones del Escogido (www.escogido.com)
- San Pedro de Macoris:
 - Estrellas Orientales (www.estrellasorientales.do)
- Santiago:
 - Gigantes del Cibao (www.gigantesdelcibao.com)
 - Las Aguilas Cibaeñas (www.aguilascibaenas.net)

Teams will vie to be the best in the DR while playing head-to-head at the Quisqueya Stadium in Santo Domingo in addition to other major DR stadiums in Santiago, San Pedro de Macoris, and La Romana. Current Dominican-born superstars include Sammy Sosa, Pedro Martinez, Manny Ramirez, Pedro Feliz, Albert Pujols, David Ortiz, Jose Reyes Vladimir Guerrero and Bartolo Colon.

To view the DR's Winter League schedule, visit: www.GoDominicanRepublic.com.

Rich in history, the Dominican Republic's first tourist was Christopher Columbus in 1492. Since then, it has developed into a diverse and luxurious destination offering both Dominican and European flavors to more than one million U.S. visitors each year. At 10,000 feet, the Dominican Republic is home to the highest point in the Caribbean. It also features some of the best golf courses and beaches in the world, the largest marina in the Caribbean and is a chosen escape for celebrities, couples and families. For more information, visit the Dominican Republic Ministry of Tourism's official Web site at: www.GoDominicanRepublic.com or call 1-888-374-6361.

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