

# Fans gather from around the world for Ripken World Series

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Mexico fans wave their signs and cheer as their team takes on Japan Wednesday at Cal Sr.'s Yard. (MATT BUTTON | AEGIS STAFF / August 18, 2011)

At a sports complex in Aberdeen, families gather from around the world with a common goal, to cheer on their sons, nephews, brothers or friends in a game of baseball.

But this baseball isn't the norm. Every summer at the Ripken Youth Baseball Academy, as part of the [Babe Ruth League Inc.](#), the complex hosts the **Cal Ripken World Series**.

Teams from all over the United States, and beyond, come for the week-long tournament, all fighting for the chance to win a World Series title. With them, come hordes of family members and just fans of the sport, filling up bleachers to cheer on Mexico versus Japan or Mid-Atlantic versus Midwest Plains.

On Wednesday afternoon, the lines were clearly drawn between Southeast and Ohio Valley on Cal Sr.'s Yard.

Lissa McCoy, of Kentucky, came out supporting her 12-year-old son, Chandler Dunn, a second baseman for Ohio Valley. For this team in particular, she said, most of the players were 5 or 6 years old when the older generation was coming back from the World Series.

"They set the dream for them," she said of the older boys.

For McCoy, who came in armed with cowbells, shakers and baseball signs, coming to Aberdeen from Kentucky is well worth it to support her son.

"We're passionate about our children," she said, "and we want to support our kids in any endeavor."

Playing baseball, her son has learned important lessons, McCoy said, encouraging all parents to get their children involved in sports. The team atmosphere, traditions and legacies of organized sports in general can help children who McCoy says are "lost."

Peter Fernstrum and Cameron Patterson also praised the program and the Babe Ruth League in general. Both men have sons on the Southeast team and traveled from North Carolina to support them.

Fernstrum's son, 13-year-old Parker, is a second baseman, while 13-year-old Will Patterson plays in the outfield. It's both boys' first time in the World Series.

"It's a great facility," Peter Fernstrum said. "The kids are having a great time."

Cameron Patterson also praised the program, calling it "very important" for the kids, their families and the community that supports them. Like many parents involved in the program, the international aspect stood out to Patterson.

"I think the international part of this is really amazing," he said. "I think it's really special."

Also in the crowds were two teammates from the Charles County Chargers, the team that took the Maryland State Champions title this year. Brett Pilkerton, a 12-year-old centerfielder, and Nate Stewart, a 13-year-old catcher, sat with coach John Stewart, watching the game between Southeast and Ohio Valley.

"It's really fun meeting other kids from other countries," Brett said.

Nate agreed, calling it a "once in a lifetime experience" to play against international teams.

At the time, the Maryland team was waiting on Hawaii's game. If Hawaii won, John Stewart said, Maryland would advance to the semi-finals. That afternoon, Hawaii won its game against Texas.

Having coached for 10 years, John Stewart has been to the World Series throughout the years, and praised what he calls a "high level of competition." Being able to play in the World Series was good for the players, he added.

"It's a nice reward at the end of the year for a lot of hard work," he said.

At the same time, a short walk away, Canada and the Dominican Republic teams were playing each other on Fenway Field.

For the Canada team, from British Columbia, it was the first time at the Cal Ripken World Series. Situated under a tree and out of the heat, four parents from the Canadian team watched the game Wednesday afternoon.

The World Series, said Diane Bradley, is a "great experience" for the players and encourages "camaraderie."

"Our kids are watching really great baseball," she said, "and watching players who are extremely talented."

Bradley came with husband, Jim Bradley, supporting their 12-year-old son, Lucas, who plays left field. With them were Ed Van Vliet and Edgar Davis.

Van Vliet, whose 12-year-old son, Kyle Van Vliet, plays first base, joked about Canada's poor showing in the World Series, referring to the high "caliber" of American baseball but pointing out that Canada "kicks ass" in hockey.

Diane Bradley, laughing, agreed.

"The Canadians would like to see a little bit of a rematch on ice," she said.

Despite the joking, the group was happy with the Cal Ripken World Series program and especially the international aspect of it.

Jim Bradley said it was "pretty special" for the boys to get a chance to play in the tournament against teams from around the world, while Diane Bradley said they were "fortunate" to have the program.

"It's bringing kids together from different countries to play a game they love," she said