

**Survey on International Youth Baseball:**  
*Current Global Trends and Potential  
Sports Marketing Opportunities*

**Completed for:**  
**Nagase Kenko Corporation**

June 2004

## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

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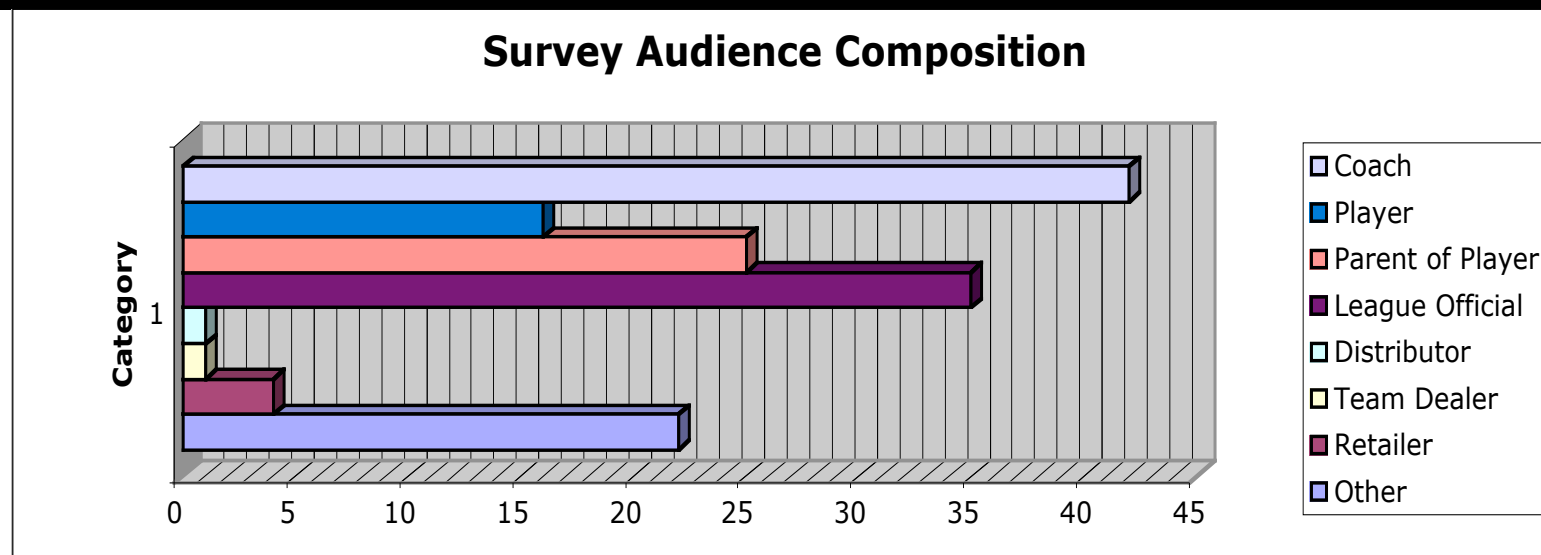
### **To Develop a Better Understanding of Current Trends in International Youth Baseball and its Sports Marketing Potential, Nagase Kenko Corp. (NKC) of Japan Retained KWR International, Inc. (KWR) to Conduct the Following Survey**

- After preliminary research, a questionnaire was prepared and approved for distribution;
- A targeted list representing leagues, coaches, distributors, parents, publications and other entities related to international youth baseball was prepared;
- A questionnaire was sent to approximately 2,500 prospects on April 22, 2004 who were asked to forward a response by the evening of May 3, 2004;
- 71 responses were received -- a response rate of almost 3%. This compares to the 1% that is considered acceptable for a survey of this kind.
- Numerous additional responses were received from other individuals that wanted to make contact with Kenko in relation to their leagues, teams and businesses but who did not complete the actual questionnaire.

### **From the Data Generated a Number of Primary Conclusions Can be Made**

- There is a growing interest in Youth Baseball around the world and the enthusiasm of leagues, teams and coaches is evident in the high response rate and comments generated;
- While the generation of responses from 21 countries should be seen as a great success, the absence of responses from key baseball countries, including Japan, the Dominican Republic and other economies is evidence of both the need to conduct future research in a multilingual framework and that the data generated in this report is reflective of only a small portion of the potential that exists;
- There is little connection among baseball-related entities -- which exist on every continent -- and there is a critical need to develop synergies and linkages and to sustain emerging momentum -- particularly in developing countries and other economies where participation has not yet reached critical mass;
- Potential activities include, but are not limited to, the development of national, regional and global tournaments, sponsorship, sales/marketing promotions, exchange and other relevant programs; and
- Globally-oriented corporations and other entities can leverage off this nascent trend and utilize it to enhance their marketing, corporate citizenship and public affairs strategies -- to build good will and closer relationships with consumer audiences, employees, business partners and other key constituencies around the world.

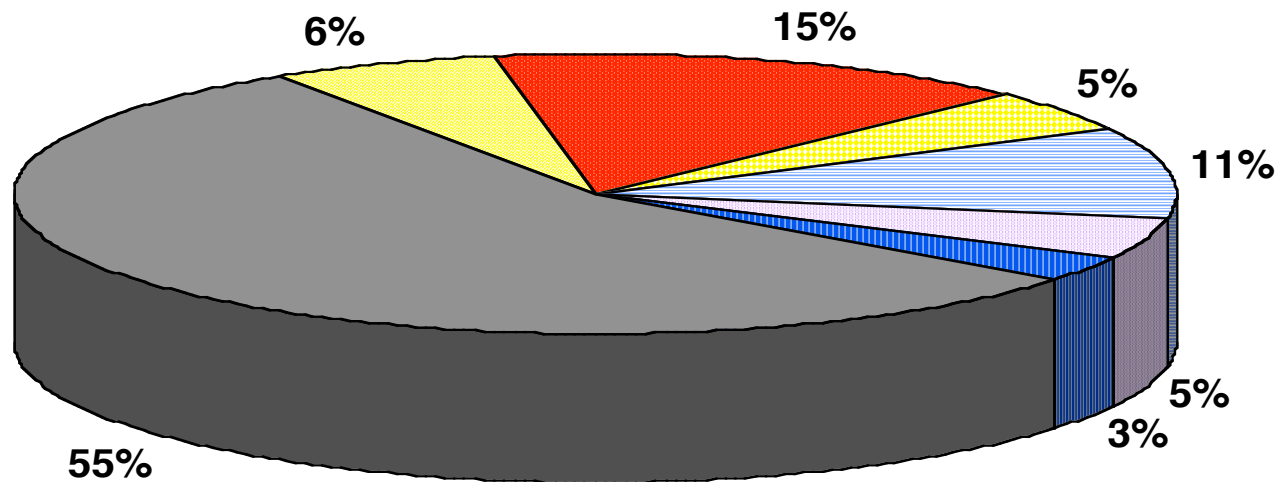
# Respondents Included a Wide-Range of Baseball Opinion Leaders



### 1) How would you best describe your involvement with baseball? (Please check all that apply)

*Out of 71 respondents, 146 choices were selected, indicating many survey participants wear more than one hats, i.e., one could conceivably be a team dealer that serves as a league official while coaching their children's team and also playing casually as well.*

# Stationed Primarily In North America with Additional Participation Around the World

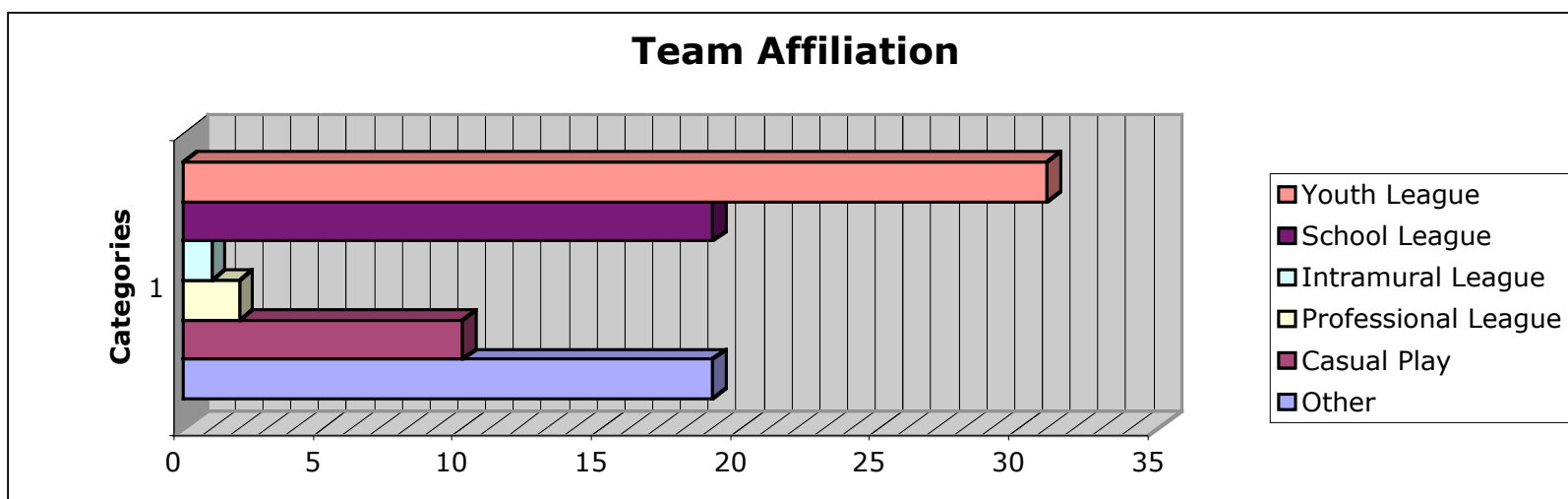


### Including Respondents from 21 Different Countries

- Responses were received from markets including:
  - **Australia**
  - **Bulgaria**
  - **Cameroon**
  - **Canada**
  - **Chile**
  - **Czech Republic**
  - **England**
  - **France**
  - **Ghana**
  - **Honduras**
  - **Lithuania**
  - **Malta**
  - **Mexico**
  - **New Zealand**
  - **Nigeria**
  - **Pakistan**
  - **Philippines**
  - **Singapore**
  - **Slovenia**
  - **Sweden**
  - **United States**

*It should be noted, however, that responses were biased toward English-speaking countries and individuals as questionnaire was written in English*

# Most Respondents Were Affiliated With Teams Sponsored by Youth Leagues



**2) If you are involved with a baseball team, is it sponsored by: (Please check all that apply)**

*Slightly less than half of the respondents noted their team was sponsored by a youth league. Within the “Others” category, respondents indicated they participated in: country, state and national leagues, independent travel teams, amateur leagues, government youth and sports agencies, clinics and corporate-sponsored teams.*

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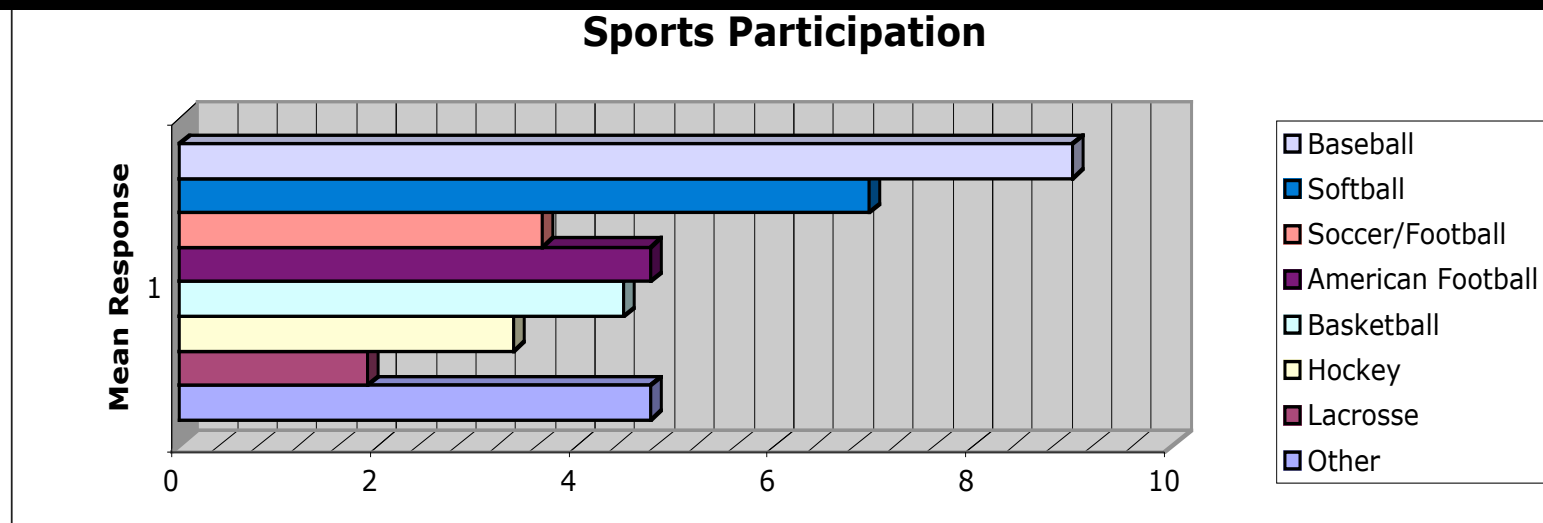
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- “ Our sponsorship is through corporate, government and MLB.” *Australia*
- “ Teams in Slovenia are non-professional and are not financially supported by any sponsor.”  
*Slovenia*
- “ There is a great interest in playing baseball in my country but the support is lacking. For instance if an organization can support my NGO the game will develop faster than we all imagine.” *Africa*
- “ I am not involved with any one team, I work for the body that oversees all teams in the U.K.”  
*U.K.*
- “ Teams and activities are also sponsored by international organizations, local organizations, and private funded organizations.” *U.K.*
- “ We are an independent travel team from ChicaGo, Illinois. We play in a travel-only league and play in tournaments.” *U.S. (Chicago)*
- “ We don't have any sponsors at all, but are backed by Country NSW and the ABF. A few of our local clubs may have their own individual sponsors but this information is rarely shared.”  
*Australia*
- “ The Long Island Braves organization runs teams from age 13 through 22 college division.”  
*U.S. (New York)*
- “ Funded through insufficient fund raising and subsidies from our national sports council consisting of about 20% of our total budget.” *Southeast Asia*



## Survey on International Youth Baseball

### Most Respondents Focused their Attention on Baseball and Softball over Other Sports



**3) What is your interest in playing the following sports? (Please rate on a scale of 1-10, one indicating no interest at all and 10 indicating a great deal of interest)**

*With a mean of 8.99 for Baseball and 6.95 for Softball, respondents expressed far more enthusiasm for these sports than Soccer (3.66), American Football (4.75), Basketball (4.48), Hockey (3.36) and Lacrosse (1.9). In the other category respondents spoke of tennis, volleyball, martial arts, cricket, golf, water sports, hiking, fishing, cycling, car racing, badminton, table tennis, hand and broom ball.*

## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

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Respondents Devote Approximately 19 Hours a Week During a Typical Season to Playing or Participating, and 11.4 Hours a Week to Watching, Reading About or Participating in, Baseball Games

**4) On average, how many hours a week do you devote to playing or participating in baseball games during a typical season?**

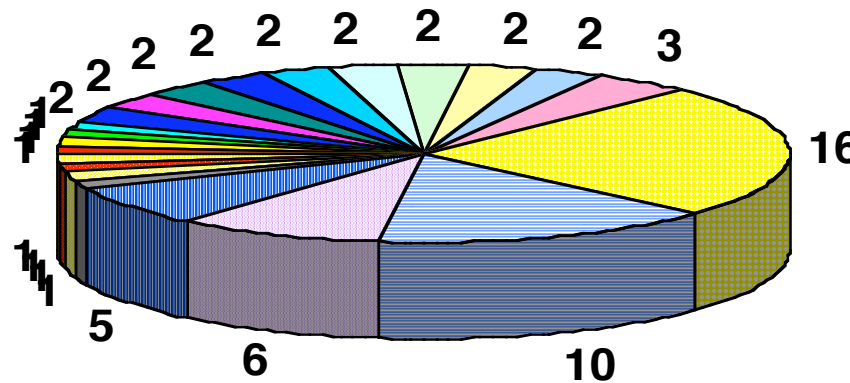
**5) On average, how many hours a week do you devote to watching, reading about, or observing professional baseball games during a typical season? What is your favorite baseball team?**

*Respondents are active playing games during a typical season and also spend a substantial amount of time watching, reading about, and participating in, baseball games.*

# Survey on International Youth Baseball

**Twenty One Teams Were Specified as The Favorites of Respondents, with the Yankees Winning (16) Followed by the Red Sox (10), and only One Person Indicating a Non-U.S. Team -- the Hanshin Tigers (1)**

5a) Please indicate name of your favorite professional baseball team?

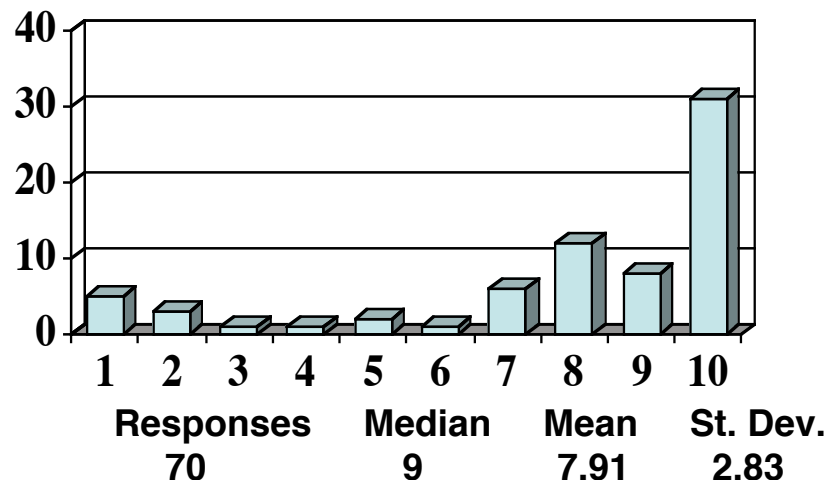


Values Reflect # of Respondents indicating a Particular Team

- |                       |                      |                   |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| New York Yankees      | Boston Red Sox       | Atlanta Braves    |
| Chicago Cubs          | Hanshin Tigers       | Texas Rangers     |
| Philadelphia Phillies | San Francisco Giants | Cleveland Indians |
| Cincinnati Reds       | Seattle Mariners     | New York Mets     |
| Pittsburgh Pirates    | Arizona Diamondbacks | LA Dodgers        |
| Toronto Blue Jays     | Baltimore Orioles    | Detroit Tigers    |
| Minnesota Twins       | Kansas City Royals   | Anaheim Angels    |
| Do not Have One       |                      |                   |

## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

### **Respondents are Highly Interested in Learning More About, & Interacting with, Amateur Leagues, Teams & Players from other Countries**



**6) How interested are you in learning more about, and interacting with, amateur leagues, teams and players from other countries? (Please rate on a scale of 1-10, one indicating no interest and 10 indicating a great deal of interest)**

*Reflecting growing enthusiasm for International Youth Baseball around the world, 44% of all respondents indicated a “10” -- the maximum degree of interest in learning more about, and interacting with, amateur leagues, teams and players from other countries.*

## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

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“ I would like to interact with other leagues and organizations as much as possible all over the world. Since ours is a poor country, I would also like to know about civic or sports organizations willing to help our country in developing the sport financially or in any other way. Baseball is not a cheap sport and especially in our country the equipment is very expensive. There is a lot of talent here that goes to waste since we could not sustain our development program to the fullest and bring out the best in our children. We even would like to create a sports scholarship program because of financial constraints of the families of these children. They sometimes stop playing the sport and even stop going school to help out their families survive. It is my hope that we could make baseball and softball a means for this children to attain a better education and eventually attain a better future.”

*Southeast Asia*

“ I need to share different experiences so I need to know more about the others.” *Cameroon*

“ Most interested in interacting with leagues, teams, players in Asia, Southeast Asia, Pacific Rim, and Oceania.” *Guam*

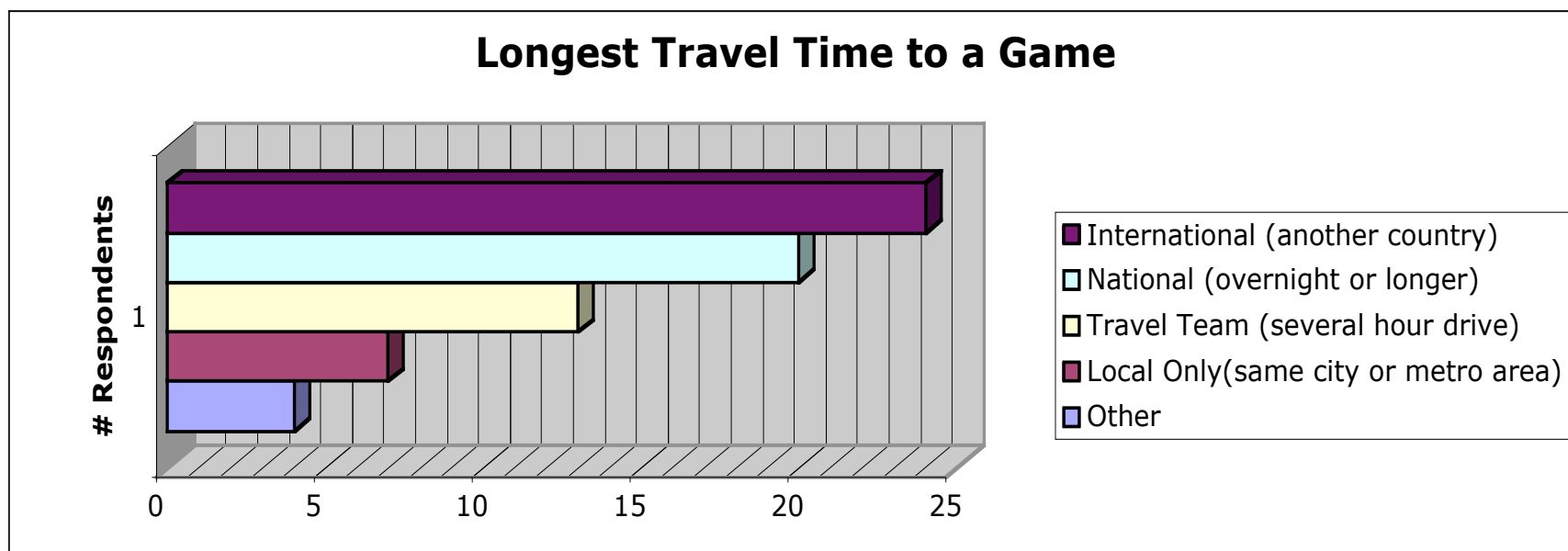
“ Very keen to promote the game in New Zealand and learn from other countries”

*New Zealand*

“ I have teams that play in World Series every year. We are also interested in playing other teams from other countries.” *U.S. (Tennessee)*

## Survey on International Youth Baseball

Over 60% of Respondents Have Traveled Overnight and a Third Internationally to Participate in a Game



### 7) How far have you ever traveled to play in a baseball game?

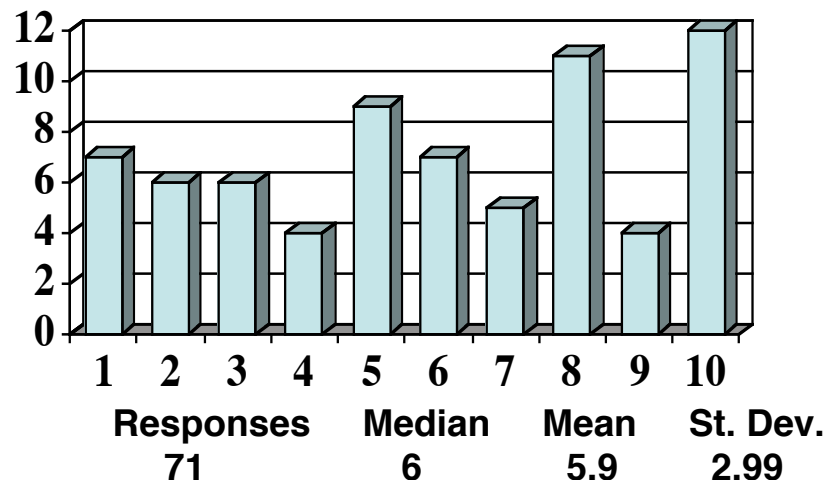
*Most respondents have traveled overnight or longer to play in a baseball game and a significant number also play on travel teams that often drive a few hours or more to games.*

## ***Survey on International Youth Baseball***

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- “ I have umpired international tournaments.” ***United Kingdom***
- “ From Yaoundé to Douala from Yaoundé to Niété (south of the country) ***Cameroon***
- “ I participated in WCBF in LA 1990 and participated in a Nankyu tournament in Tokyo 1989. Have played in the Swedish Junior National team in Europe.” ***Sweden***
- “ Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, USA, Canada, Japan, Great Britain” ***France***
- “ Only in Europe.” ***Slovenia***
- “ I have traveled to almost the whole of W. Africa, So. Africa and happily to Japan to play and train with the Fukuoka Daiei Hawks and with the Resort Sports Academy in Okinawa.” ***Ghana***
- “ I have been asked to play and teach in Germany.” ***U.S. (Idaho)***
- “ I travel to all parts of the world attending congresses. On top of it am responsible to arrange friendly matches for my national teams with other countries. So far we have been only to Bangkok for the BFA tournament.” ***Singapore***
- “ I travel 5 months a year in Asia and to the United States. Have much opportunity to play games and teach teams.” ***Guam***
- “ I am a player in national selection and I played in South American championship.” ***Chile***
- “ We have not travelled on an overnight drive yet, but will in June of 2004.” ***U.S. (Chicago)***
- “ I am involved in both junior and womens national events with country NSW teams.”  
***Australia***

**There was a Wide Range of Opinion Regarding the Issue of Safety When Using Regulation Baseballs**



**8) How concerned are you about possible injuries when playing with regulation baseballs? (Please rate on a scale of 1-10, one indicating no concern at all and ten indicating a great deal of concern)**

*While a significant number of respondents expressed a concern over the issue of safety when using regulation baseballs, with the “10” response indicating the greatest concern generating the largest number of respondents, opinion was quite diverse, with a very high deviation in responses -- a disparity that is also reflected in the comments.*



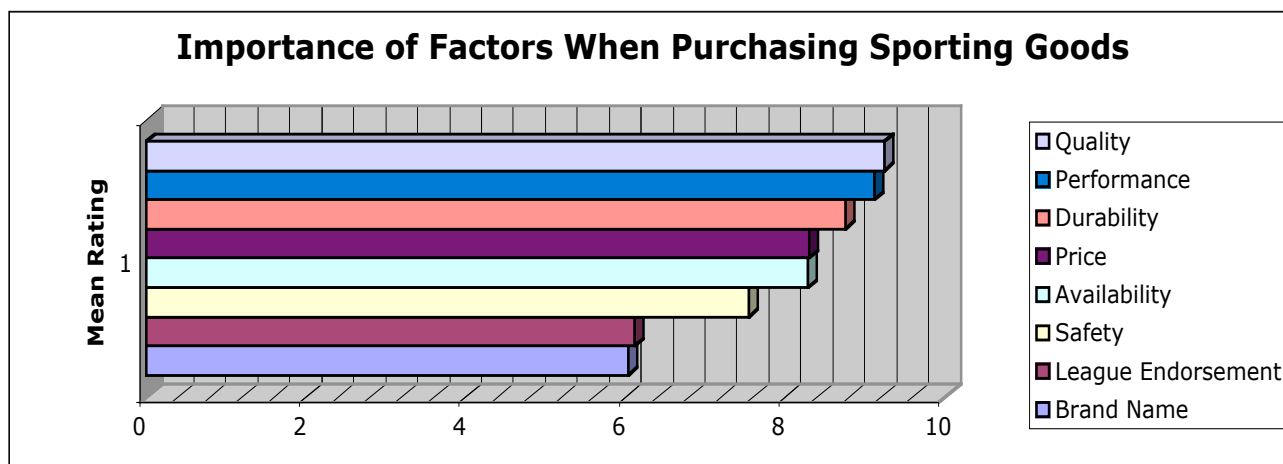
## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

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- “ With children I am very concerned. Adults I have no concerns above taking standard precautions such as proper helmets and other protection.” *U.K.*
- “ Baseball is a relatively safe sport, per occurrence.” *U.S.*
- “ Here in Africa we do not have good playing facilities so there is always a great deal of concern with regard to injuries.” *Ghana*
- “ Depends on age and experience of individual players.” *Malta*
- “ I am all about teaching safety in baseball specifically the throwing motion.” *U.S. (Idaho)*
- “ Cannot think about injuries. Must stay in shape and meet the level of play that you are participating in. My students are never put in a situation where they can get hurt.” *Guam*
- “ Look what just happened to Al Lieter, a star pitcher with the New York Mets. He was lucky, as the line drive hit him was above the temple and a glancing blow.” *U.S. (New York)*
- “ Bigger children pitching from 46' and 50' mound distances is a dangerous situation. Line drives can hurt a pitcher or base runner at third, or third baseman charging on a fake bunt/swing away.” *U.S.*
- “ Our players are thirteen years old & preparing to participate in HS baseball.” *U.S. (Chicago)*
- “ It's part of the game.” *New Zealand*

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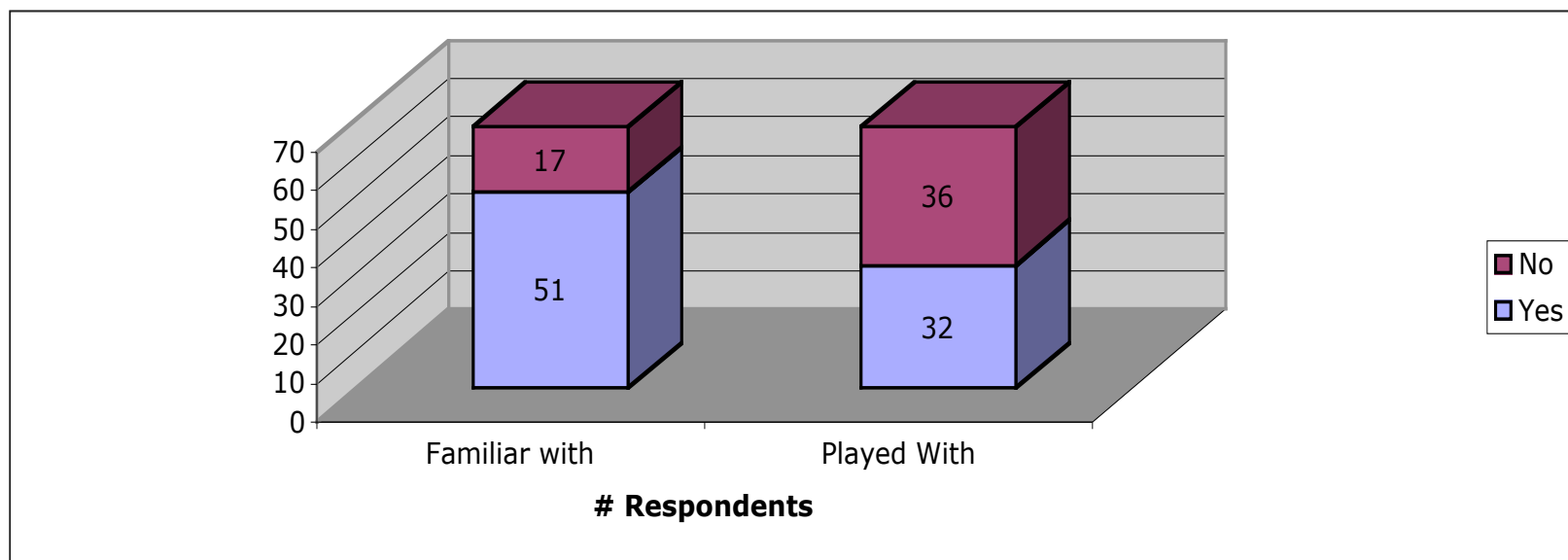
### **Respondents Were Most Concerned with Quality & Performance and Least with Brand Name and League Endorsements**



**9) Please rate the importance of the following factors when purchasing baseballs and other sporting goods equipment (Please rate on a scale of 1-10, one indicating not at all important and 10 being extremely important)**

*While Quality and Performance generated the strongest ratings, followed by Durability and Price, all with relatively low deviations, Availability and Safety were also fairly strong with higher deviations, followed by League Endorsement and Brand Name, which were weaker though still positive, though with the highest deviations of all responses to this question.*

### **Most Respondents are Familiar with Safety Baseballs, though Less Than Half Have Played with One**

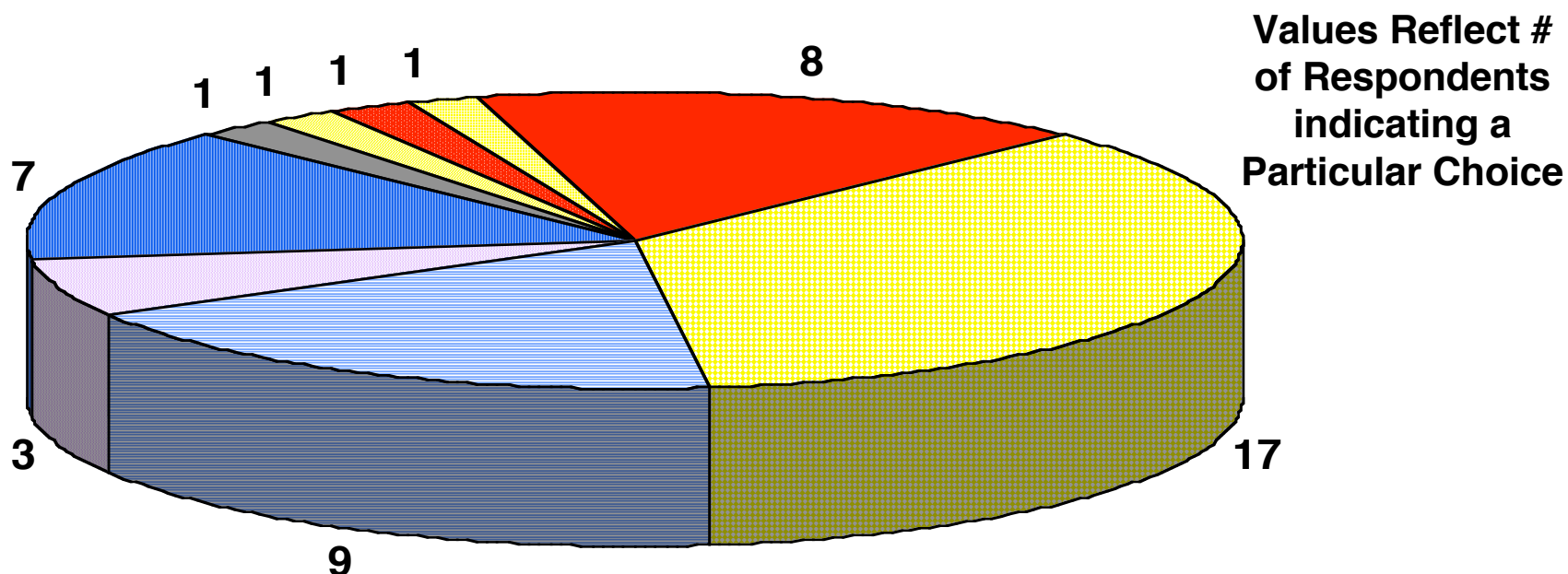


#### **10) Are you familiar, and have you ever played, with a safety baseball?**

*Almost 72% of respondents had prior knowledge of safety baseballs, though only about 45% indicated that they had played with one.*

## Survey on International Youth Baseball

### If You are Familiar, or Have Used, a Safety Baseball, What Brand or Kind of Ball Have You Used Most?



Kenko Easton Diamond Rawlings DeBeer Martin  
Jugs Markwort Not Sure

## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

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- “ Thought the balls used in the Kenko tournament in the UK were very good for under 13 leagues. Once a curve ball is acceptable (+16) the ball would not work.” *U.K.*
- “ I would like to know more about the T-ball program in Japan. I hope I could get an English copy of its rules, training manuals and videos. I would also want to know about other leagues or organization dealing in T-ball in Japan.” *Philippines*
- “ I don't really know what is safety baseball.” *Africa*
- “ Our Youth teams played last year in Nettuno (Italy) with Kenko balls.” *Slovenia*
- “ (Safety balls work best with) beginners especially under 10yrs.” *Malta*
- “ (Safety balls) are used in our diaper league (2-4 yr olds).” *U.S. (New York)*
- “ We have organized for three consecutive years a Children's Baseball Fair playing with XXX Balls. Only recently we changed because XXX is too expensive. ...Could (you) sponsor at least the cost ... Every year over 700 children between the ages of 10 - 12 years participate. These participating children will be given a glove and a ball each and the schools a set of playing equipment, 4 helmets, catchers equipment, rubber bases, pitching plate, T-Ball batting and a dozen balls.” *Southeast Asia*
- “ Use safety balls (RIF) for drill work and short work with players. Many Tee-ball programs require reduced injury factor balls.” *Guam*
- “ This type of baseball should advance to the major league level.” *U.S. (Massachusetts)*

## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

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### **11) How long have you been playing baseball and what first attracted you to the game?**

1. I have been in and around organized baseball for over 40 years. 2. Played baseball since 1965 youth baseball league until the present with recreational baseball league 3. Playing since six years old, now an administrator 4. Playing/Coaching for 35 years. IT was just something everyone did when I was growing up. 5. seven years. 1)the batting, 2)the umpires and catchers outfits 6. I have been playing for about 20 years, I'm 26. Dad have played to, so I was "born and raised" on the field 7. since 1984, my schoolmates 8. since 1986 9. 25 years the fun 10. Since 1981 11. For almost 20 years. My older brother played it and that is what attracted me to the game. 12. 15 Years. What first attracted me was the action during the game - batting and spectacular catching of the ball. 13. I have been playing since 1987. I was initially introduced to the game in Kinshasa in 1977, but it took me ten years to finally decide to play, thanks to my mentor and friend Peter. 14. 4 Years. I used to play softball and now my kids are at an age they also enjoy ball sports. As a family we love watching the USA league which my 10 Year old gets a great deal of inspiration from 15. Since I was 5 years old. 16. I played for 10 years when I was at school and return with my kids. I enjoyed watching major games on TV. 17. 22 years - grew up with it 18. For almost 15 years. Started as a 5 year old and have loved the game since 19. 30 years. Started playing in USA at 8yrs. 20. I played my entire life and have been coaching for the past 9 years. 21. 30 years 22. I have been involved with baseball in the UK since 1999. 23. Played baseball in high school and college. Been coaching baseball on and off for 28 years 24. 40 years hitting wad the first attraction 25. 3 years. 26. 25 years. The strategies of the games. You can still play when you are 42 27. 50 years. All my friends played. Dad and I played catch. 28. 40 YEARS 29. I have played baseball for forty nine years. Pitching caught my attention at age 11 and I still have the same desire, to get the batter out, as I did then. 30. I did not play baseball. Nevertheless we have about 12 teams that participated in our national league and schools tournament initiated by me when we became a recognized BFA/IBA members since 1988.

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[31.](#) Played Little League Baseball at the age of eight, high school baseball, and coached Little League as an adult. Going to Yankee Stadium as a youth attracted, and my grandfather (a Mets fan) used to watch games on TV all the time. [32.](#) Playing 45 years. Started when I was a young boy. Then baseball was the preferred sport and did not have all the distractions and opportunities today's youth have. I like the one on one competition and team work aspect also. [33.](#) Played in America in Little League, Babe Ruth, High School Umpiring in Europe for past ten years. [34.](#) Coached and umpired for 18 years [35.](#) @5 years - loved the sport and still do [36.](#) Over 54 Years [37.](#) Since I was 4. Parents love baseball and signed me up. [38.](#) I played base ball 30 years. [39.](#) 30 YEARS. WATCHING PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL ON TELEVISION WITH MY GRANDFATHER WHEN I WAS 3 YEARS OLD. [40.](#) 40 years, since I was a kid. [41.](#) 18 years [42.](#) 30 years grew up with a family that loves baseball [43.](#) Played for 12 years; coaching for 6 years [44.](#) started playing at 6 ..... currently 54 [45.](#) Since I was 5 years old. My father played. [46.](#) It is the challenge introducing a new game in my country. Moreover, I also watched the game studying in the US. [47.](#) 25 years-- my dad got me involved with baseball. [48.](#) I am the manager and associated with baseball for over forty years. My son, who is thirteen, is playing his tenth season. [49.](#) 50 yrs. excitement [50.](#) Since age 9. Everyone loved to play it or to watch others playing. [51.](#) 16 years. Was involved with softball at first, the moved on to baseball when I married my husband and had my 4 boys. [52.](#) 25 years - it's fun [53.](#) I have played as long as I can remember and coached since I was 16 years old. (I am 41 now). I was attracted to the skill it took to hit and catch a baseball, as well as the fun I had playing in my neighborhood. [54.](#) I never played, but have been an administrator and father in the game for 13 years [55.](#) I played baseball since I was five until sixteen years old and am now forty-one. My two boys play and my daughter softball. I coached my sixteen year old boy for approx. 10 years and my fourteen year old daughter for three years. I am now in the process of training my five year old boy. [56.](#) I have been involved for over 30 years. My Dad was a coach and built many ballfields for my home town, I played softball, now my children play. I coach and i'm on a committee. [57.](#) I work in baseball, was raised on the sport and that is why I always want to be involved with it. [58.](#) Since I was 9 -- 35 years!! The dignity and sportsmanship (usually) associated with the sport. [59.](#) Fifteen years.

## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

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12) Is there anything about baseball in your country/region that makes it unique or different from how it is played in other parts of the world?

“ The accommodations such as fields are below par to other countries.” *U.K*

“ Not really different but since half of the year is rainy season we would like to develop the game during this wet season. It could be indoor or outdoor since we just want to continue the interest of the public to baseball and softball all year long. *Philippines*

“ We have only 3 baseball stadiums in only one part of the country. We are challenged to teach the kids baseball using parks and football stadiums.” *Bulgaria*

“ Even though here we lack the necessary equipment for the game whatever we lay our hands on we play as if we are in the major leagues. With the very little that we have we have been able to produce players that could match top players from the Great Japan. Therefore if we get the needed help we would be unbeatable.” *Africa*

“ Much less popular here.” *U.K.*

“ Yeah, we play in snow.” *U.S. (Minnesota)*

“ Baseball league has only been going for 10yrs. in Malta.” *Malta*

“ You cannot play your best players at their best positions every game. We have a pitching limitation rule.” *U.S.*



## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

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- “ France used to play a traditional game with bases named "la Theque" *France*
- “ We have managed to form our very own national team. A selection committee selects the players from our national tournament. Baseball is becoming more popular now in our country. We are planning to organize regular and yearly international matches with out neighbors in preparation for our forthcoming SEA Games in Manila in 2005. Although we have not sufficient fund, the unique thing is all our officials and players do not get any allowance or payment in promoting and playing the sports due to lack of fund. All of them are volunteers.” *Southeast Asia*
- “ The only thing I can think of is the wide mix of International players who play Major League Baseball than in any other country or part of the world.” *U.S. (New Jersey)*
- “ Economics. My countries don't have the facilities, coaches education, player opportunities. Teams in Asia do not play enough games to get better (outside of Japan,Taiwan, Korea) Because it is not a national pastime sport, Baseball in Asia is not attractive to the youths and adults. In Asia players have yet to fall in love with the game.” *Guam*
- “ I'm not sure, as I have not had the pleasure or opportunity of seeing/participating in Japan.” *U.K.*
- “ That question really answers itself here in the USA as we know it started here! *U.S. (Phila.)*
- “ I do not know the rules of leagues in other countries. Therefore I am unable to accurately answer this question.” *U.S. (Illinois)*
- “ In the U.S., baseball has the most tradition and player skill.
- “ I don't know how you play (in Japan)” *U.S. (Oklahoma)*

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- “ Northeast baseball season is shortened because of weather” *U.S.*
- “ No. However at the moment, we do not have Baseball facilities all over the place. We only one standard Baseball and softball facility presently. So most of our Baseball is played in any available open field which is marked for the purpose. Equipment is in short supply as we have to import our the equipment we use.” *Nigeria*
- “ We are the inventors of the game.” *U.S. (Pennsylvania)*
- “ I believe that baseball in the United States is very focused on competition, which has led to an enormous amount of travel teams.” *U.S. (Texas)*
- “ Yes, it's a minor sport.” *New Zealand*
- “ The lack of quality coaches and supply of good equipment.” *Australia*
- “ We have different rules due to the lack of proper fields, we have no fences so we have a two base rule. We lack competition and we need to find a way that we can send our teams overseas for competition.” *New Zealand*
- “ Popularity” *U.S. (New Hampshire)*

## *Survey on International Youth Baseball*

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**Nagase Kenko Corporation invites inquiries from companies interested in incorporating International Youth Baseball within their marketing, corporate citizenship, and public affairs programs, as well as leagues, teams, coaches, players, sporting goods companies and other potential alliance partners with an interest in promoting greater participation in youth sports and baseball around the world.**

For more information, please contact:

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