



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MLB INTERNATIONAL INVITES STUDENTS TO *PLAY BALL!* ACROSS CHINA
Grassroots Program to Launch in 120 Elementary Schools in Five Cities

Major League Baseball International (MLBI) will launch its grassroots youth baseball program, *Play Ball!*, in five cities across China this fall, it was announced today. The program will be incorporated into the physical education curriculum for students aged eight-to-12 in 120 elementary schools in Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Tianjin and Wuxi.

Play Ball! China is set to reach more than 100,000 elementary school students in the 2007-08 school year alone. Participating students will be introduced to the rules of the game and instructed on developing their baseball skills as part of their in-school physical education programs.



"The Major League Baseball International *Play Ball!* Program will put bats and balls into the hands of hundreds of thousands of young players in China in the coming years," said Paul Archey, Senior Vice President, International Business Operations, Major League Baseball. "We are committed to baseball's future in China and the *Play Ball!* Program promises to play an important role in China's emergence as a baseball-playing nation."

"Baseball has been developing for a long time in China," said Ganbei Lin, Sports and Culture Director of the Beijing Education Bureau. "MLB's current promotion of baseball will be a big help toward Chinese youth and the enthusiasm for sports, not only in spurring the growth of baseball but also for pouring new energy into the development of Chinese youth sports."

Nagase Kenko Corporation will serve as an official supplier of *Play Ball!* China. The world-renowned Kenko Air Safety Baseball™, combining the performance of a real baseball with greater safety and durability, will be the only baseball used in the program.

In preparation for the first season of *Play Ball!* China, MLBI has conducted coaching clinics for more than 400 university and grade school-level physical education teachers in Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai this past summer. Led by Rick Dell, Director of China Baseball Development for Major League Baseball International, six American baseball coaches with extensive international experience instructed the prospective *Play Ball!* coaches on basic baseball skills and coaching techniques. At the conclusion of the clinics, MLBI donated all used equipment to support baseball in the local communities. MLBI has hired ZOU Marketing to provide support in the planning and execution of the clinics and *Play Ball!* program launch. (See below for more information on ZOU Marketing.)

About *Play Ball!*

Play Ball! is Major League Baseball International's youth start-up program aimed at supporting organizations that want to introduce or expand organized youth baseball in their communities. Since 1994, MLBI has conducted successful league and school-based youth programs in Australia, Germany, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

About MLB International

Major League Baseball International (MLBI) focuses on the worldwide growth of baseball and the promotion of Major League Baseball and MLB Club trademarks and copyrights through special events, broadcasting, market development, licensing and sponsorship initiatives. MLBI is committed to showcasing the world's best baseball talent through international events around the globe. Broadcast in 229 countries and territories, Major League Baseball game telecasts are re-transmitted in 13 different languages. MLBI executes and supports game development programs targeting players and coaches from grassroots to elite levels. With an extensive list of marketing partners worldwide, MLBI continues to grow its position as a leader in the international marketplace. MLBI is supported in its mission through presences in Beijing, New York, London, Sydney and Tokyo.

About Nagase Kenko Corporation

Headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, Nagase Kenko Corporation is a leading global sporting goods manufacturer whose Air Safety Baseball™ is used by youth leagues on every continent. It presently employs a staff of over 250 individuals around the world. It maintains four Japanese manufacturing facilities and three regional sales offices in Osaka, Fukuoka and Hokkaido. In addition, it maintains an extensive network of agents, distributors and representatives who help to manage its sales and marketing and promotional activities around the world.

About ZOU Marketing

ZOU Marketing is a strategic sports branding agency with over 25 years of China sports industry working experience. ZOU has been tapped by MLB to manage its Grassroots initiatives in China. The company will be in charge of organizing coaching clinics and establishing youth baseball leagues in 5 cities for 120 schools. For more information, please visit www.zoumarketing.com.

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