

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**INAUGURAL BREAKTHROUGH SERIES, SPONSORED BY MLB AND USA BASEBALL,
WILL PROVIDE EXPOSURE FOR TALENTED YOUNG PLAYERS**

Major League Baseball has collaborated with USA Baseball to sponsor the inaugural Breakthrough Series at the MLB Urban Youth Academy in Compton, California, during the week of July 21, 2008. The event is designed to showcase rising high school junior and senior baseball players from urban areas throughout the United States who have not participated in other travel and high-end tournaments, giving the players considerable exposure.

The Breakthrough Series will consist of instruction and a round-robin series of games among three teams of selected players from July 22-24.

Many college coaches are expected to attend the event to recruit players who demonstrate outstanding potential but who may not have had the opportunity for exposure through other summer events. The tournament will consist of three teams selected by the Major League Scouting Bureau, the MLB Urban Youth Academy and the Atlanta-based organization Mentoring Viable Prospects (MVP), which focuses on supporting young athletes in both academic and athletic settings to obtain college scholarships. At the event, USA Baseball will work with the athletes to facilitate communication between players and college recruiters.

“Major League Baseball is very pleased that our partnership with USA Baseball will yield this important forum in which deserving young athletes will get additional exposure and potential opportunities,” said Jimmie Lee Solomon, MLB’s Executive Vice President for Baseball Operations. “The Breakthrough Series is another step in our comprehensive ongoing efforts to bolster the foundation of our game in the areas that most need support.”

“We are extremely excited to partner with Major League Baseball on this initiative,” said Paul Seiler, Executive Director/CEO of USA Baseball. “This will be a great enhancement to our charter to grow the game of baseball in America.”



The selection process for players is currently underway. The Major League Scouting Bureau and the MVP teams will comprise players selected from tryouts across the country, while the Academy's team will be made up primarily of players from Southern California. USA Baseball, in helping to administer the event, will notify all of the selected participants and distribute the necessary information to players and parents. All players' expenses will be paid for by USA Baseball, made possible for the most part by its partnerships with contributing sponsors.

The MLB Urban Youth Academy, which Major League Baseball established in 2006 as part of its Urban Youth Initiative, will host the Breakthrough Series. The Academy was founded to foster a passion for baseball among urban youth, ages 8-17, who would not otherwise be able to participate in the sport. Along with week-long camps and after-school programs, the Academy provides participants with educational resources by partnering with El Camino College-Compton Center. The Academy also offers opportunities for students to learn about different aspects of baseball including sports journalism, umpiring, field management and public relations.

MVP currently sponsors the annual MVP Summer Baseball Tournament, which will be held this July before the Breakthrough Series at Georgia Tech. Past tournaments have featured players from New York, Illinois, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia and Missouri. The success of the MVP organization and its annual tournament in providing exposure, scholarships and opportunities for young players inspired the Breakthrough Series.

USA Baseball is the National Governing Body of amateur baseball in the United States and is a member of the United States Olympic Committee. The organization selects and trains the United States Olympic Baseball Team (and all other USA Baseball Professional Teams); the USA Baseball National Team (collegiate); the USA Baseball 18U, 16U and 14U National Teams; and the USA Baseball Women's National Team, all of which participate in various international competitions each year.

The Breakthrough Series is one of the many events Major League Baseball has made possible since the launch of its business partnership with USA Baseball in July 2006. The relationship is designed to help support USA Baseball's mission to cultivate interest in baseball at the amateur level. MLB's support has funded various national and international events in which USA Baseball participates. The Academy and the Breakthrough Series are instrumental elements in MLB's aim to increase interest and participation in baseball among American youth and, in particular, among those who may be disadvantaged.

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