



AMERICAN LEGION

**BASEBALL**





## PURPOSE

To inculcate in youth a better understanding of the American way of life and to promote the principles of 100 percent Americanism.

To instill in the nation's youth a sincere desire to develop within themselves feelings of citizenship, sportsmanship, loyalty and team spirit.

To aid in the improvement and development of the physical fitness of our country's youth.

To build the nation's future through our youth.

## CODE OF SPORTSMANSHIP

### I will:

Keep the rules

Keep faith with my teammates

Keep my temper

Keep myself fit

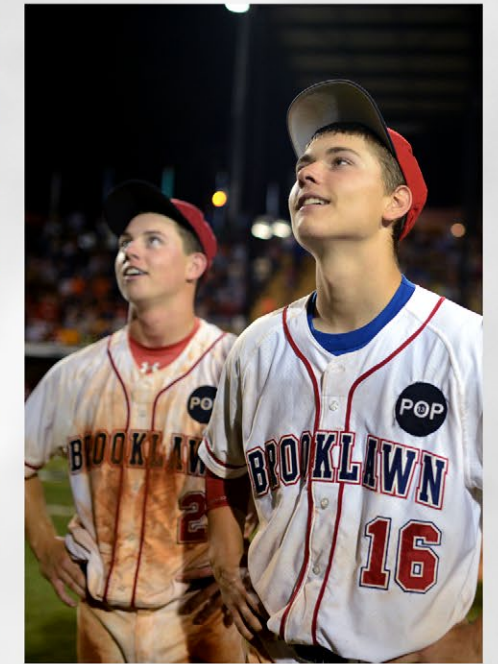
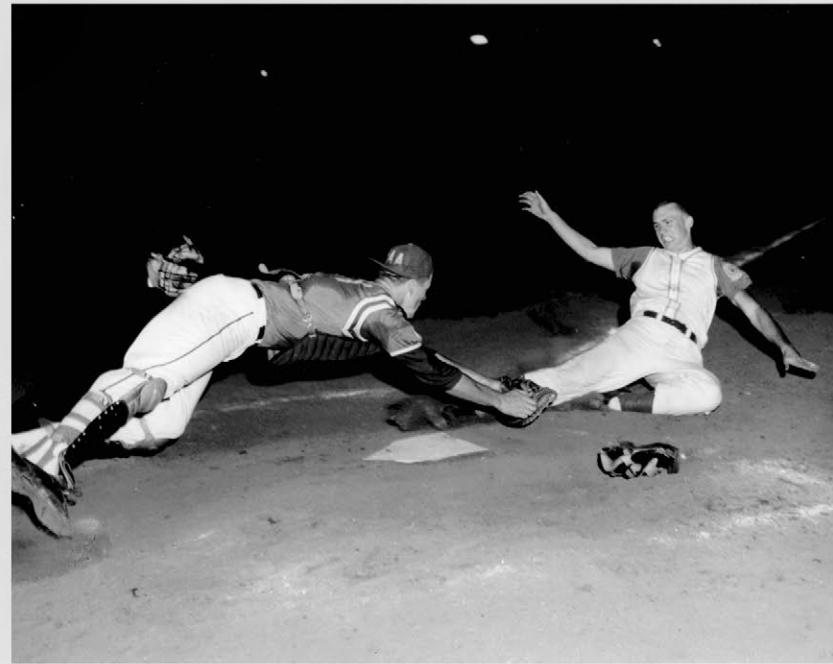
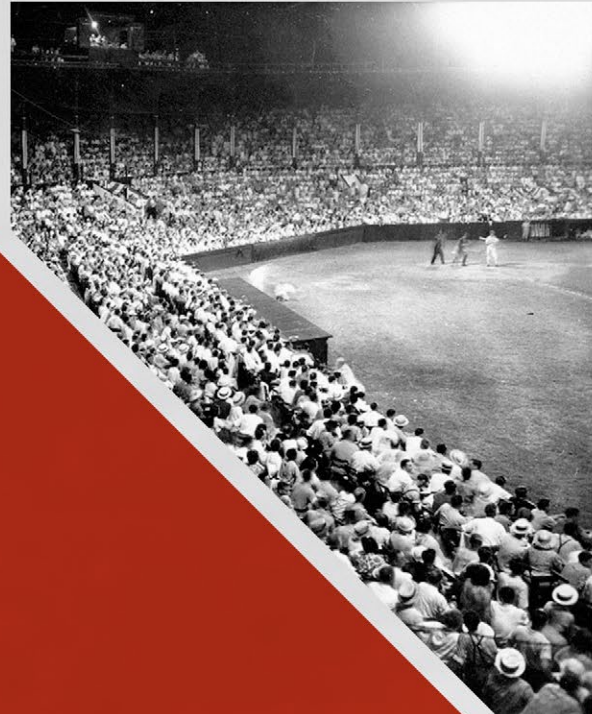
Keep a stout heart in defeat

Keep my pride under in victory

Keep a sound soul, a clean mind, and a healthy body



# HISTORY



**1925** The American Legion's Department of South Dakota proposes "Legion Junior Baseball" as a nationwide program of service to U.S. youth.

**1926** The first national tournament is played, with 16 states participating.

**1928** The Executive Council of Baseball agrees to underwrite American Legion Baseball (ALB) up to \$50,000. Major League Baseball (MLB) continues to make a significant contribution to the program each year.

**1938** The national tournament is broadcast to more than 3,000 radio stations, bringing the American Legion World Series (ALWS) to every part of the country.

**1961** ALB is strengthened under program coordinator George W. Rulon, who holds the post until 1987. Upon his retirement, the American Legion Player of the Year award is renamed the George W. Rulon Player of the Year.

**1970s** The Dr. Irvin L. "Click" Cowger RBI, Rawlings Big Stick and Bob Feller Pitching awards are established, based on players' statistics in the regional and ALWS tournaments.

**1982** ALB adopts an eight-site, eight-team, double-elimination tournament format.

**1986** The American Legion begins to annually award \$10,000 in scholarship money to eight deserving players. Today, the scholarship has grown to \$25,000 awarded to 50 outstanding players, each receiving \$500.

**2010** Shelby, N.C., is named the permanent home of the ALWS, spending \$2.5 million to upgrade its stadium with new MLB lights, a high-definition video scoreboard, office complex and expanded seating.

**2011** The ALWS breaks an all-time attendance record that stood for 75 years, when more than 86,000 fans watch the five-day tournament. Total paid attendance has increased every year since, exceeding 120,000 in 2017 and 2018.

**2012** Diamond Sports becomes the key sponsor of the American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team. Eight players receive a \$2,500 scholarship, and an overall top academic player is named team captain and awarded a \$5,000 scholarship.

**2014** Brooklawn, N.J., Post 72 is the first team in 40 years to win back-to-back national championships since Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, Post 146 won two in a row in 1973 and 1974.

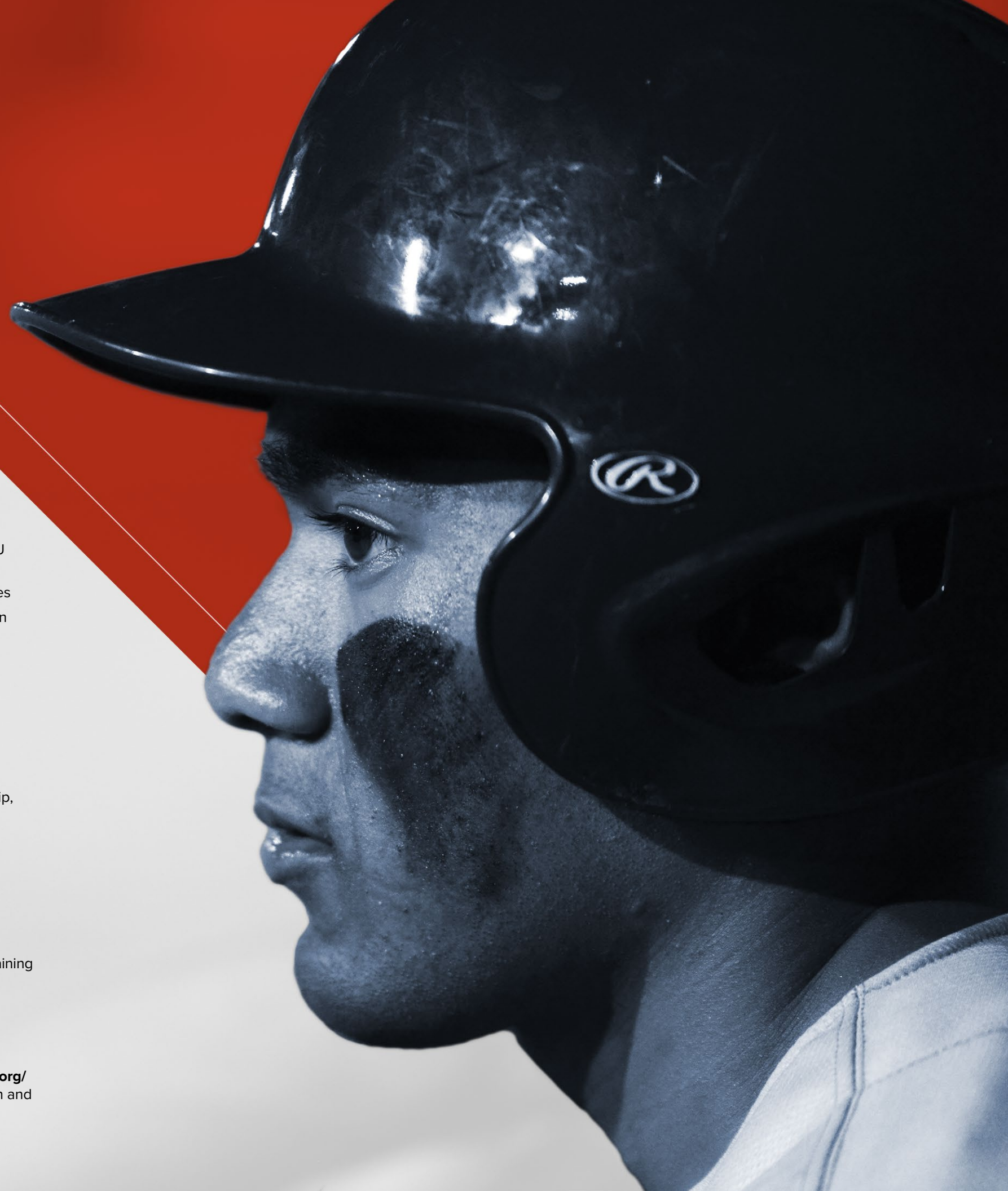
**2016** By a score of 8-6, Texarkana, Ark., Post 58 defeats Rowan County, N.C., Post 342 in 12 innings to win The American Legion Baseball World Series in Shelby, N.C. The eight-team tournament, aired live on television by ESPN, is attended by an all-time record crowd of 120,000.

**2020** – The COVID-19 pandemic forces the cancellation of the American Legion World Series, for the first time since 1927.

**2021** – Idaho Falls Post 56 becomes one of six teams in ALWS history to win back-to-back championships.







## BENEFITS

- Sponsored by The American Legion, the nation's largest wartime veterans organization
- Only amateur baseball program that covers airfare, hotel and meal expenses while participating at regional and national tournaments
- Senior and junior programs for youth 13 to 19
- Annual scholarships for deserving players, including the Diamond All-Academic Team and individual state awards
- Honors the George W. Rulon Player of the Year through a special arrangement with the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y.
- ALWS "Championship Tuesday" televised on ESPNU
- ALWS championship team recognized at the World Series
- National member organization of USA Baseball

## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Provides youth with a positive, well-disciplined environment in which to play baseball
- Helps youth develop confidence and builds self-esteem
- Promotes good sportsmanship, physical fitness and good citizenship

## YOUTH PROTECTION

- Educates local volunteers on how to safeguard the protection of youth participants
- Teams required to conduct annual background checks on managers, coaches and other volunteer staff with regular access to the players
- Team managers, coaches and volunteer staff must pass a background screening and training through Protect Youth Sports

## SERVICE AND SUPPORT

- Free online national rule books, including rules interpretation by email and telephone
- Full-time staff available to answer questions and concerns
- User-friendly website, [legion.org/baseball](https://legion.org/baseball), for team registration and tournament listings



# AMERICAN LEGION WORLD SERIES



In 2011, Keeter Stadium in Shelby, N.C., became the permanent home of the American Legion World Series. The city quickly began a \$2.5 million upgrade of the stadium and Veterans Field, anticipating crowds that have broken single-game and series attendance records every summer since.

By the time teams get to Shelby for the American Legion World Series, most will have played about 50 games – and some closer to 70. But all typically will have won five games at the substate level, five games at the state level and five games at the regional level. At Keeter Stadium, they must win five games to become the ALWS champion. Whatever their route to Shelby, all eight regional winners have proven they deserve a shot at the championship.

The semifinal and championship games are broadcast on ESPNU along with select pool-play games.

For details about Shelby and Keeter Stadium, a full World Series event schedule, ticket prices and more, go to [americanlegionworldseries.com](http://americanlegionworldseries.com).



VETERANS FIELD AT KEETER STADIUM

HOME OF THE  
AMERICAN LEGION WORLD SERIES

SHELBY-CLEVELAND COUNTY



# AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL REGIONS



**NORTHWEST REGION**  
Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming

**WESTERN REGION**  
Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Texas

**CENTRAL PLAINS REGION**  
Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota

**MID-SOUTH REGION**  
Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Oklahoma

**GREAT LAKES REGION**  
Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin

**MID-ATLANTIC REGION**  
Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia

**NORTHEAST REGION**  
Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

**SOUTHEAST REGION**  
Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Find your department (state) baseball chairman online at [legion.org/baseball/contacts](http://legion.org/baseball/contacts).

For information on state championship tournaments, dates and more, go to [legion.org/baseball/tournaments/state](http://legion.org/baseball/tournaments/state).

For information on regional tournaments, dates and more, go to [legion.org/baseball/tournaments/regional](http://legion.org/baseball/tournaments/regional).

# AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

## George W. Rulon Player of the Year

Through a special arrangement with the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y., a player is selected each year as the George W. Rulon Player of the Year. Named for a longtime coordinator of the American Legion Baseball program, the award recognizes integrity, mental attitude, cooperation, citizenship, sportsmanship, scholastic aptitude and general good conduct.

## American Legion Baseball Slugger Trophy

Since 1945, The American Legion has presented a slugger trophy to the player with the highest batting average during national competition.

## American Legion Baseball Big Stick Award

The Big Stick Award is given at the American Legion World Series to the player who rounds the most bases in regional and national competition.

## Dr. Irvin L. "Click" Cowger RBI Memorial Award

Named for Dr. Irvin L. Cowger, a former Department of Kansas adjutant and devoted baseball supporter, this award goes to the player with the most runs batted in during regional and national competition.

## Bob Feller Pitching Award

Bob Feller was the first American Legion Baseball alumnus elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. The recipient is the player with the most strikeouts in regional and national competition.

## James F. Daniel Jr. Memorial Sportsmanship Award

The James F. Daniel Jr. Memorial Sportsmanship Award is presented to a player who participates in the American Legion World Series and best embodies the principles of good sportsmanship.

## Jack Williams Memorial Leadership Award

Jack Williams served as adjutant of the Department of North Dakota for 49 years before his death in 1967. Aware that proper adult leadership is an important component of success, Williams encouraged qualified men to work in the program. To honor Williams' memory, this award is presented to the manager and coach of the national championship team as outstanding representatives of adult leadership.

## All-Academic Team

Team managers and head coaches of American Legion Baseball teams can nominate players for a scholarship award. Each department baseball committee selects an overall state winner, who receives a scholarship of \$500 or more.

Department scholarship winners are considered for the American Legion All-Academic Team, sponsored by Diamond Sports. The World Series Scholarship Committee selects a player from each of the eight regions to be part of the All-Academic Team, and each receives a \$2,500 scholarship. An overall top academic player is named the team captain and awarded a \$5,000 scholarship.

Download a scholarship application online at [legion.org/baseball/resources](http://legion.org/baseball/resources).

## American Legion Graduate of the Year

Each year, The American Legion honors a former American Legion Baseball player who is currently playing in the major league for his character, leadership, playing abilities and community service. Individuals are recommended by their respective post.

For a complete list of all awards and winners, go to [legion.org/baseball/awards](http://legion.org/baseball/awards).



# BE PART OF AN AWARD-WINNING TRADITION

## Local American Legion post affiliation

- Find an American Legion post in your area using the Post Locator at [legion.org](http://legion.org)
- Contact your local post to help affiliate and sponsor your team
- Outside sponsored teams can apply through the department (state) baseball committee

## Player eligibility and registration

- Open to players 13 to 19
- Player eligibility and recruiting is covered in state and national rules
- Complete and submit a team application at [baseball.legion.org](http://baseball.legion.org)

## Department baseball committee

- Establishes rules and regulations for the department (state)
- Appoints a state chairman and other volunteers to serve on the committee
- Handles team registration, disputes and questions of eligibility



# TESTIMONIALS

*“American Legion Baseball was a huge stepping stone for me. I had some great teammates and great coaches. At the same time, I learned a lot about respect. When those guys came out to see you at the ballpark, you always knew that they sacrificed for us to go out and play hard.”*

*Luis Gonzalez, former Arizona Diamondbacks out-fielder whose 2001 game-winning hit gave the team its first World Series championship. Gonzalez played for American Legion Post 248 in Tampa Bay, Fla.*

*“It’s the purest form of baseball left. You’re not coming to play for colleges. You’re coming to play for your teammates and your coaches and that ultimate goal of winning a national championship.”*

*Matthew Parr, player for Brooklawn, N.J., Post 72, back-to-back ALWS champions in 2013 and 2014*

*“On Legion diamonds across the country, these young men are learning not only the skills of baseball but the valuable lessons of sportsmanship, self-discipline, teamwork, courage and integrity.”*

*Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn, writing in the October 1975 American Legion Magazine, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of modern baseball. Kuhn was a member of American Legion Post 342 in Freeport, N.Y., and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal in 1978.*

*“The choice between playing Legion ball and travel ball is easy. When you play travel ball, you are limited to certain places you can play. When you play Legion ball, you are playing with people who care about you. There are friends who you have played with and friends who you have played against. It’s just more structured, and the competition, I feel, is a lot better. It was one of the best opportunities I’ve had.”*

*Braden Shipley, pitcher, selected by the Arizona Diamondbacks in the 2013 Major League Baseball draft. Shipley led Medford, Ore., Post 15 to the 2009 American Legion World Series.*

*“The way (Legion Baseball) prepared me was playing against better players. When I was a freshman, I would play against a guy who would be a No. 1 pick the next day. We played against better players and we played a lot more often .... It was the best competition going.”*

*Don “The Hit Man” Mattingly, manager for the Los Angeles Dodgers and former New York Yankees first baseman. Mattingly played for American Legion Funkhouser Post 8 in Evansville, Ind.*





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What does my team need to do to participate in American Legion Baseball?

There are three steps to becoming a certified ALB team:

- Complete and submit a team application online at [baseball.legion.org](http://baseball.legion.org).
- Purchase accident and liability insurance, and successfully complete background screenings and training for the team manager and coaches before your state's deadline.
- Submit your team's roster to your department baseball chairman for approval prior to the start of regular season play or the state's deadline.

## What are the benefits of being part of ALB?

Besides affiliation with one of the nation's premier and longest-running amateur youth baseball programs, ALB players learn citizenship, sportsmanship, loyalty and team spirit through competitive baseball.

## Are American Legion teams required to carry insurance?

All teams are required to carry both accident and liability insurance. Both are available through the online registration process.

## Are 19-year-old players eligible to participate in ALB?

Yes. However, there are additional eligibility requirements for a returning "graduated student" player. American Legion Baseball rule 2.B.4 outlines the additional requirements.

## How do I find a team in my area?

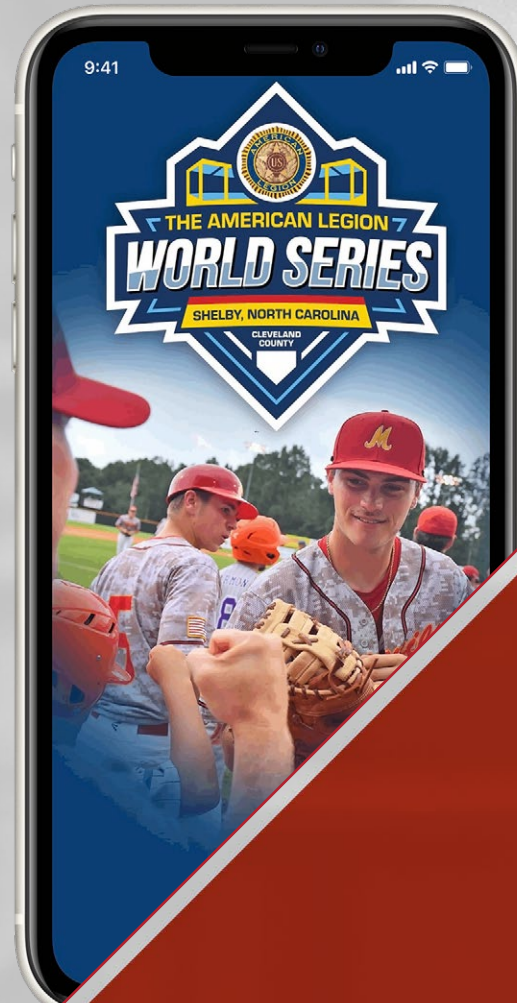
Contact your department (state) baseball chairman or find a team online at [legion.org/baseball/teams](http://legion.org/baseball/teams).

# AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL APP

From your smartphone, look up scores, box scores, pairings and more for regional games and the American Legion World Series.

Use the free app to:

- Enjoy full tournament coverage in stories, photos and videos.
- Purchase baseballs, hats, T-shirts and other merchandise.
- See what fans are posting on Twitter and Instagram during the tournaments.
- Access travel information and other resources.
- Download the app for your mobile device at [legion.org/mobileapps/baseball](http://legion.org/mobileapps/baseball).



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## American Legion Baseball

P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
(317) 630-1206  
baseball@legion.org

 [legion.org/baseball](http://legion.org/baseball)

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