



NEWS RELEASE



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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL RETURNS TO JAPAN IN 2018 AND 2019

Seattle Mariners and Oakland Athletics to Open 2019 Season at the Tokyo Dome; Team of MLB Stars to Visit Japan for 2018 All-Star Tour in November

The Oakland Athletics and Seattle Mariners will open the 2019 Championship Season with a two-game set on March 20th-21st at the Tokyo Dome in Tokyo, Japan, Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association announced today. In addition, MLB will renew its All-Star Tour with Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) with six games across Japan from November 8th-15th.

"Major League Baseball is thrilled to return to Japan for the 2018 All-Star Tour this fall and for the 2019 Japan Opening Series next March," said Baseball Commissioner Robert D. Manfred, Jr. "The renewal of the All-Star Tour gives MLB and Nippon Professional Baseball an outstanding opportunity to continue a longstanding tradition that showcases the best of our game for our many fans across Japan, as well as build up excitement for the 2019 Opening Series between the Seattle Mariners and Oakland Athletics. The city of Tokyo offers a terrific backdrop for the Opening Series, and we look forward to once again bringing Major League games to the Japanese fans as we celebrate our shared love of Baseball."

"Players who participate in the Japan All-Star Series often talk about how it's among the highlights of their careers," said MLBPA Executive Director Tony Clark. "The games are a great way for them to personally experience not only exciting games against new competition, but also the culture of a great country with knowledgeable fans. An Opening Day Series is another great opportunity to build on the much anticipated success of the off-season tour."

The 2019 Japan Opening Series, which will serve as A's home games, will represent the fifth time that MLB has opened its season in Tokyo. The last Opening Series in Tokyo took place in 2012, when the A's and Mariners split the two games. This will mark the eighth season-opener to be played internationally. MLB has previously opened seasons in Monterrey, Mexico (1999); Tokyo (2000, 2004, 2008, 2012); San Juan, Puerto Rico (2001); and Sydney, Australia (2014). Overall, more than one million fans have attended 19 MLB Opening Series games.

"The Oakland Athletics are proud to once again take part in the Japan Opening Series," said A's President Dave Kaval. "We are honored to represent Major League Baseball during this special event. Japan has incredible baseball fans and we look forward to returning to Tokyo to help promote our sport."

"The Mariners have been closely tied to Japan since Nintendo purchased a majority of the team in 1992 and have had Japanese players on our roster every season since 1996," said Mariners Chairman and Managing Partner John Stanton. "It is an honor for our team to return for the Opening Series in 2019, and we look forward to this opportunity."

The All-Star Tour games in November will mark the 37th time overall that Major Leaguers have toured Japan for exhibition games, dating back to 1908. The All-Star Tour will be hosted in Tokyo (Tokyo Dome), Hiroshima (Mazda Zoom Zoom Stadium) and Nagoya (Nagoya Dome). The events will begin with an exhibition game against the Yomiuri Giants in Tokyo on November 8th, followed by three games in Tokyo from November 9th-11th, one game in Hiroshima on November 13th and two games in Nagoya on November 14th-15th.

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Major League Baseball, the Major League Baseball Players Association, and all those making a great effort in preparation for the Japan-U.S. All-Star Series," said Nippon Professional Baseball Commissioner Atsushi Saito. "It has been four years since Samurai Japan and MLB last met. With our goal of winning a gold medal in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, this gives our players experience in high-level games against MLB players. Many Japanese players have made their way to the U.S., and that has certainly brought MLB close to baseball fans throughout Japan. I am also looking forward to the 2019 MLB Opening Series in Japan, which enables us to feel a very different excitement from that of NPB. This long-awaited Japan-U.S. All-Star Series will be a great opportunity to further deepen our bilateral relationship."

As part of the 2019 Japan Opening Series, both MLB Clubs will also compete against Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) teams in day/night doubleheaders scheduled for March 17th-18th. Below is a tentative schedule of events for both the 2018 Japan All-Star Tour and for the 2019 Japan Opening Series:

2018 JAPAN ALL-STAR TOUR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>GAME</u>	<u>VENUE (CITY)</u>
Thursday, November 8 th	MLB Team vs Yomiuri Giants	Tokyo Dome (Tokyo)
Friday, November 9 th	Game #1	Tokyo Dome (Tokyo)
Saturday, November 10 th	Game #2	Tokyo Dome (Tokyo)
Sunday, November 11 th	Game #3	Tokyo Dome (Tokyo)
<i>Monday, November 12th</i>	<i>Travel Day</i>	
Tuesday, November 13 th	Game #4	Mazda Zoom Zoom Stadium (Hiroshima)
Wednesday, November 14 th	Game #5	Nagoya Dome (Nagoya)
Thursday, November 15 th	Game #6	Nagoya Dome (Nagoya)

2019 JAPAN OPENING SERIES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>GAME</u>	<u>VENUE</u>
Sunday, March 17 th	MLB Team vs NPB Team*	Tokyo Dome
Sunday, March 17 th	MLB Team vs. NPB Team*	Tokyo Dome
Monday, March 18 th	MLB Team vs NPB Team*	Tokyo Dome
Monday, March 18 th	MLB Team vs. NPB Team*	Tokyo Dome
Wednesday, March 20 th	Seattle Mariners vs. Oakland A's**	Tokyo Dome
Thursday, March 21 st	Seattle Mariners vs. Oakland A's**	Tokyo Dome

**Teams, Home/Road designation, and start times for NPB games will be determined at a later date*

***The Athletics will be the home team for both MLB Opening Series games. Start times will be determined at a later date.*

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