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MLB, MLBPA, WBSC reach player agreement for Olympics, Qualifiers

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LAUSANNE, Switzerland -- The World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) has reached an agreement with Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) to permit players on MLB 40-man rosters to participate in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and the respective qualifiers.

As part of the accord, National Team roster sizes will increase from 24 players to 26 for the upcoming WBSC Baseball Americas Qualifier in Arizona (22-26 March in Surprise and Tempe, USA) and the WBSC Baseball Final Qualifier (17-21 June in Taichung and Douliu, TPE) to safeguard the health of the players and prevent potential fatigue.

Per the MLB-MLBPA-WBSC agreement, National Teams will be able to select any MLB-affiliated player, except those on active MLB 26-man rosters.

“The WBSC is thrilled to partner with MLB and the MLBPA to give more of the top athletes in the sport of baseball the highest honour of representing their country as well as the opportunity to play on the world’s biggest sporting stage, the Olympic Games,” said WBSC President Riccardo Fraccari. “This collaboration with the MLB and MLBPA is a further demonstration of the common will, together with other professional organisations, to make baseball a truly global sport and to contribute to the success of the Olympic Games.

“The return of Olympic baseball and softball is expected to be one of the main attractions of the

Tokyo 2020 Games, and we -- on behalf of our sport and athletes worldwide -- are doing everything we can to make it the most exciting and competitive Olympic baseball event ever.”

### **Road to Tokyo 2020**

The eight participating nations in the WBSC Americas Baseball Qualifier in Arizona include host and world No. 2 USA, Canada (No. 12), Colombia (No. 14), Cuba (No. 8), Dominican Republic (No. 10), Nicaragua (No. 15), Puerto Rico (No. 11) and Venezuela (No. 9). The winner of this qualifier will earn a place in the 2020 Olympics.

The six teams competing in the WBSC Baseball Final Olympic Qualifier in Taiwan include host Chinese Taipei (No. 4), along with Australia (No. 6), China (No. 21), Netherlands (No. 7) and the second- and third-place finishers from the Americas qualifier. The winner of this qualifier will earn the sixth and final quota of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic baseball tournament.

Four nations have already qualified for baseball at the 2020 Olympics: host Japan (No. 1), Israel (No. 18), Korea (No. 3) and Mexico (No. 5).

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