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# Babe Ruth tourney opens



BY KEN BOSSERMAN • SPORTS WRITER • JULY 23, 2009

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STAUNTON — The participating teams in the Babe Ruth Cal Ripken 12-under Southeastern Regional Tournament arrived in Staunton Wednesday, and with the pre-tournament festivities just about finished, it's time to play baseball.



State champion teams throughout the Southeast - from Alabama to North Carolina and everywhere in-between, checked in Wednesday morning at the Thomas D. Howie Memorial National Guard Armory.

The Staunton Cal Ripken League, host for the 10-team tournament, supplied each player with a water bottle stuffed full of goodies, ranging from candy to discounts at local attractions.

The tournament, played at Jerry May Field in the Kiwanis Baseball Complex in Gypsy Hill Park, has several other attractions besides the double elimination play that eventually will send one team to the 12-and-under Cal Ripken World Series Aug. 13 in Winchester, Mass.

The first of those was a base-running contest, followed by a home run derby Wednesday afternoon on May Field.

Each team selected one participant.

In base running, the players were timed on how long it took to circle the bases.

The winner was D'Marco Jackson from Glenn Allen, the Virginia champion. He circled the bases in 11.97 seconds. In second place was Staunton's Ben Smith who completed the run in 12.06 seconds. In third place was Ryan Lafever from Cookville, Tenn., who ran it in 12.84 seconds.

The home run contest followed, with each team having one participant. Each was given 10 fair hit balls to clear the fence.

Once again, it was a Glen Allen player who won the event as Jackson Wilbourne cleared the fence six times. Timmy Rutkowski of Western North Carolina was right behind with five slams.

The contest saw some enormous blasts. Several nearly landed on Constitution Drive, while one home run hit second base on the adjoining T-ball field.

The evening was capped by a banquet and swim party at the Gypsy Hill Pool. Nearly 400 players and family guests participated.

"It couldn't have gone any better," said Staunton Recreation and Parks Director Chris Tuttle. "Everybody is having a great time. We rolled out the welcome mat. Everything has gone as planned."



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Ben Smith, 12, of the Staunton Tournament Team runs the bases in a home run derby and base running competition Wednesday. The event was part of the Babe Ruth Cal Ripkin 12-under Southeastern Regional Tournament at May Field in the Kiwanis Baseball Complex in Gypsy Hill Park. (Mike Tripp/The News Leader)

# THURSDAY EVENTS

- 10:30 a.m.: Opening Ceremonies
- · Noon: South Carolina vs. Tennessee
- 2:30 p.m.: Virginia vs. North Florida
- . 5 p.m.: West North Carolina vs. Bahamas
- 7:30 p.m.: Staunton vs. Alabama

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Running the bases

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Action begins today with a breakfast for coaches and officials at the armory, followed by the opening ceremonies set for 10:30 a.m. at the field. The first game is at noon when South Carolina and Tennessee battle. Staunton, the host team in the 10-squad field, enters the action at 7:30 p.m. when it takes on Rainbow, Ala.

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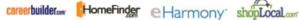


















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