

Metro all-stars will play team from Japan

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The Japan vs. Metro All-Star Baseball Classic will be held at Kennedy High School on Tuesday, Aug. 14, featuring a touring high school team from Yamanishi, Japan, against many of the top players from Cedar Rapids and Marion.

The game is being organized by the Metro Sports Report, in cooperation with the Kennedy Baseball Support Group and the Iowa Amateur Athletic Union.

The Metro All-Star team will feature players from Kennedy, Linn-Mar, Marion, Prairie, Xavier, Jefferson and Washington. Bret Hoyer, who led Kennedy to the 2010 state title, will be the head coach of the Metro squad with help from his staff.

The Metro Sports Report will select the All-Star team, based on recommendations from the Metro coaches. Anyone who played for his high school team this season is eligible for the All-Star club, including graduated seniors.

"Baseball is truly an international game, and the Japan vs. Metro All-Star Classic will give local fans a chance to see how the game is played in another part of the world," said Jim Ecker, the president of the Metro Sports Report. "The contest also will showcase many of the outstanding players from our local schools who rarely get to play in a special event like this."

The team from Japan plans to spend a week in the Des Moines area, playing games against high school teams while visiting different parts of the state and midwest. They will arrive in Cedar Rapids for lunch on Aug. 14, spend the afternoon with local host families and return to Kennedy that night for the all-star event.

The Japan vs. Metro All-Star Baseball Classic will consist of one nine-inning game and all of the players on the Metro squad will be guaranteed of playing.

Perfect Game USA, a national baseball scouting company that's based in Cedar Rapids, hosted a team from Japan for a game in 2010 at Veterans Memorial Stadium. It was a

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successful event, despite rain that delayed the start of the contest.

The team from Japan defeated the Perfect Game all-star squad in 2010 in an exciting, well-played game. The Metro all-star team undoubtedly will be challenged in this year's contest as well.

Julie Cain, who teaches Japanese at Cedar Rapids Washington High School, is helping the Metro Sports Report arrange for host families. The Japanese players and coaches will spend the night of Aug. 14 with host families before returning to Des Moines on Aug. 15.

There will be a pre-game ceremony that features the national anthems from both countries and a gift exchange between the two teams.

Tickets cost \$5 and may be purchased at the gate. Spectators may bring lawn chairs if they wish or sit in the bleachers.

The roster for the Metro All-Star team will be announced in a few weeks.