

# History of the Little League Western Region

Groundbreaking for the Western Regional Headquarters was in 1969. The property for the Headquarters was made available to Little League Baseball by the City of San Bernardino. Al Houghton Stadium and the Thomas C. Boyle Administration Building were the first buildings constructed; local firms donated building materials, equipment and labor to gradually complete the complex. Warner Hodgdon, a local businessman, was a major contributor to the building of the Swimming Pool, which is an important asset to the facility. Many District Administrators, and local Volunteers worked very hard, a "labor of love", to make the Western Regional Headquarters the wonderful youth sports complex that it is today.

The Western Region Headquarters is located about sixty miles East of Los Angeles on Interstate Highway 215. The total complex consists of 27 acres, with a Major League field that seats approximately 8,000, and is where each year the Little League Major Division Regional Tournament is played. There is also a lighted Senior/Intermediate/Softball field on the property. There are seven dormitories to house teams and coaches from eleven western states; California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Wyoming, Montana Idaho, Utah, Nevada, and Arizona. The facility has its own cafeteria that serves over 900 meals per day during the annual Regional Tournament.

The first tournament site for the West Team was in downtown San Bernardino where the first Regional Tournament was played in 1950. The Junior Chamber of Commerce of San Bernardino along with four local businesses sponsored four teams. This was the first time Little League Baseball was played West of the Rocky Mountains; the original field is still on the same site today. The first Western Regional Team representative to travel to the Little League World Series was the Jaycee Little League from San Bernardino in 1951.

In 1971 the Tournament expanded to three states with a four-team tournament. In 1972, the first full regional tournament was played consisting of the 13 Western Regional States, including Colorado and New Mexico and those mentioned above. Colorado and New Mexico were moved into the Southwest Region in 2001. The tournament today with its twelve teams (with two from California) representing the 11 Western States is played in early August and lasts approximately 11 days. The average attendance during the tournament is from fifty to sixty thousand people. The tournament staff is totally voluntary and comprises men and women from all eleven Western States.

In 2001 the four Regions in the United States became five. A new Southwest Region was added and some states were relocated to balance the five regions. At that time, New Mexico and Colorado were moved into the Southwest Region located in Waco Texas. Today in all regions of the United States, there are two representatives sent to the Little League World Series. The two Divisions from the Western Region are the Northwest consisting of the following states, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. The states that make up the West Division are, Arizona, Hawaii, Northern California, Southern California, Nevada, and Utah. Both the Northwest and the West Championships are televised by ESPN and are broadcasted around the world.

The largest crowd to attend a Western Regional Tournament was in 1985 between Mexicali Little League (representing Southern California) and Danville Little League from Northern California. The second largest crowd was in 1993 and the teams represented were Long Beach Little League in Southern California and San Ramon Little League in Northern California.

The Regional Facility offers Leadership Training Clinics for League Officials, District Administrators, Managers/Coaches, Scorekeepers and Volunteer Umpires. Also, two one-week Umpire School training sessions are held along with weekend rules and mechanics clinics.

The complex is available to Local Little Leagues for use during the regular season. They can spend a weekend playing league games and if they wish the teams could stay overnight in the team barracks and enjoy the atmosphere of this facility. The complex is also available to the community for meetings and conferences. The facility is used as a multi-purpose facility approximately forty weekends a year.