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## **CALIFORNIA WINTER LEAGUE ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT WITH BASEBALL CHALLENGE LEAGUE`**

*The Baseball Challenge League (BCL) is one of Japan's premier professional leagues and seeks to sign players from the California Winter League*

November 28, 2017

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. – The California Winter League announced today that it has reached an agreement with Japan’s Baseball Challenge League to allow each BCL team to attend the 2018 California Winter League and sign players for the 2018 BCL season. This agreement, along with an agreement that is already in place with the Frontier League in the United States, seeks to maximize the amount of opportunity that players can find in the CWL as they seek to earn professional offers before the beginning of spring training. “We are excited to work with the Baseball Challenge League and host representatives from their teams in Palm Springs. I believe the BCL will provide another avenue to the upper levels of professional baseball for our players as well as a unique opportunity to experience the game internationally,” CWL General Manager Justin Reschke said.

The Baseball Challenge League is a professional baseball league in Japan made up of 8 teams which are all located near the central part of Japan. The league has two divisions, East and West, and each team plays roughly 72 games each season. Each year, players are elevated from the BCL to Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB), which is the highest level of pro ball in Japan. Without an extensive minor league system like baseball fans are used to in the United States, the NPB relies more on leagues like the Baseball Challenge League to develop quality talent who will hopefully one day graduate to the Japanese big leagues.

“Each year, the CWL sees players signed to MLB, the Frontier League, the American Association, the Atlantic League, among others, and we are always told by our coaches at the conclusion of each season that there are more CWL players who deserve a shot to play professionally. The BCL will provide that opportunity for players who are maybe younger and would welcome the experience of playing internationally, or more experienced players who can go over there and have a good chance of moving up to Nippon Professional Baseball. Either way it’s more teams who are recognizing the talent that is here in Palm Springs at the California Winter League year after year,” added Reschke.

The California Winter League will play its 9<sup>th</sup> season in 2018. Over the previous 8 seasons, over 600 professional contracts have been offered to CWL players from MLB teams, professional independent league teams and international teams. The California Winter League aims to provide exposure for players who have graduated college or have prior professional experience and who are now free agents. The coaching staff in charge of managing CWL teams and working with its players consists of MLB scouts and independent league managers who are looking to sign players before spring training begins. Players will report on January 22<sup>nd</sup> with games beginning at Palm Springs Stadium on January 25<sup>th</sup>. The CWL Championship Game will be held on February 18<sup>th</sup>, with players departing on February 19<sup>th</sup>. For more information on the California Winter League visit [www.californiawinterleague.com](http://www.californiawinterleague.com) or call (760) 778-4487.

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