

AJA BASEBALL LEAGUE

In 1900, the number of Japanese in Hawaii totaled 61,111, the largest ethnic group in the islands. This made up of about 40% of the total population. In that year Congress passed the Organic Act, effectively abolishing the plantation labor contract system. Plantation workers were free to leave, and many decided to move into other occupations and businesses. Many moved into Honolulu where there were significant and well established Japanese communities. Therefore Honolulu was the birthplace of the first all-Japanese baseball league (AJA).

The first AJA league was formed on Oahu in 1908 and held games at Atkinson Park in Kakaako. From there, the Japanese Baseball League expanded to nearly all of the Hawaiian Islands.



Traditions Continue

For the past 100 years and counting AJA Baseball has been one of the most competitive baseball leagues after college. Many famous Hawaii players have competed in this league for years. For example the ex-Mililani High School Baseball Coach Glenn Nitta has won several Most Valuable Player and Batting Champion Awards throughout his time. Some of the more recent highlighted players were ex-University of Hawaii players, Dean Hashimoto and Corey Ishigo. Another ex-University of Hawaii player who set dozens of records here in Hawaii in high school as well as in college was, Derek Tatsuno.



Many of Derek's teammates would say that he built Rainbow Stadium, which is now Les Murakami Stadium, with his popularity in Hawaii. There have been many famous names that come out of

Hawaii which now compete in the AJA Baseball League.



Parks

The AJA baseball teams play a different Baseball parks all around Hawaii. On Oahu there are three different fields in which team play at, Hans L'Orange being one of the first parks where it all started. Many other fields have been added such as Ala Wai, Central Oahu Recreational Park, and Les Murakami Stadium.

References

Okiihiro, Michael M., AJA Baseball in Hawaii: Ethnic Pride and Tradition. 1st edition (1999).