

10-11 SEP 2011, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

# SCHEDULE OF PLAY 10-11 SEPTEMBER 2011, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

## National Baseball League

### Saturday 10 September

11:00	Diamond 1	Game 1	Southampton Mustangs	@	Lakenheath Diamondbacks	9 innings
15:00	Diamond 1	Game 2	Southern Nationals	@	Richmond Flames	9 innings

### Sunday 11 September

15:00	Diamond 1	Final	Game 1 Winner	@	Game 2 Winner	9 innings
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## AAA League

### Saturday 10 September

11:00	Diamond 2	Game 1	Essex Redbacks	@	Liverpool Trojans	9 innings
15:00	Diamond 2	Game 2	Halton Jaguars*	@	Bristol Badgers	9 innings

### Sunday 11 September

12:30	Diamond 2	Final	Game 1 Winner	@	Game 2 Winner	9 innings
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## AA League

### Sunday 11 September

15:30	Diamond 2	Final	Bolton Robots of Doom	@	Latin Boys	9 innings
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## Single-A League

### Sunday 11 September

09:30	Diamond 2	Final	Birmingham Maple Leafs	@	Cambridge Royals	9 innings
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Can the **Richmond Flames** stage a repeat victory, after a convincing win in the 2010 final?



photo by [www.event-photos.co.uk](http://www.event-photos.co.uk)



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MATTINGLY



*atlantic*

# MEET THE COMPETITION

## National Baseball League (NBL)

### Lakenheath Diamondbacks

The Diamondbacks have imposed themselves fantastically on the British Baseball world with an imperious season, finishing top of Pool B by some way. The airforce base's softball teams have performed very well in continental competition, and their first foray into baseball has been similarly successful. They are not unbeatable, but they will not be easy opposition.

### Richmond Flames

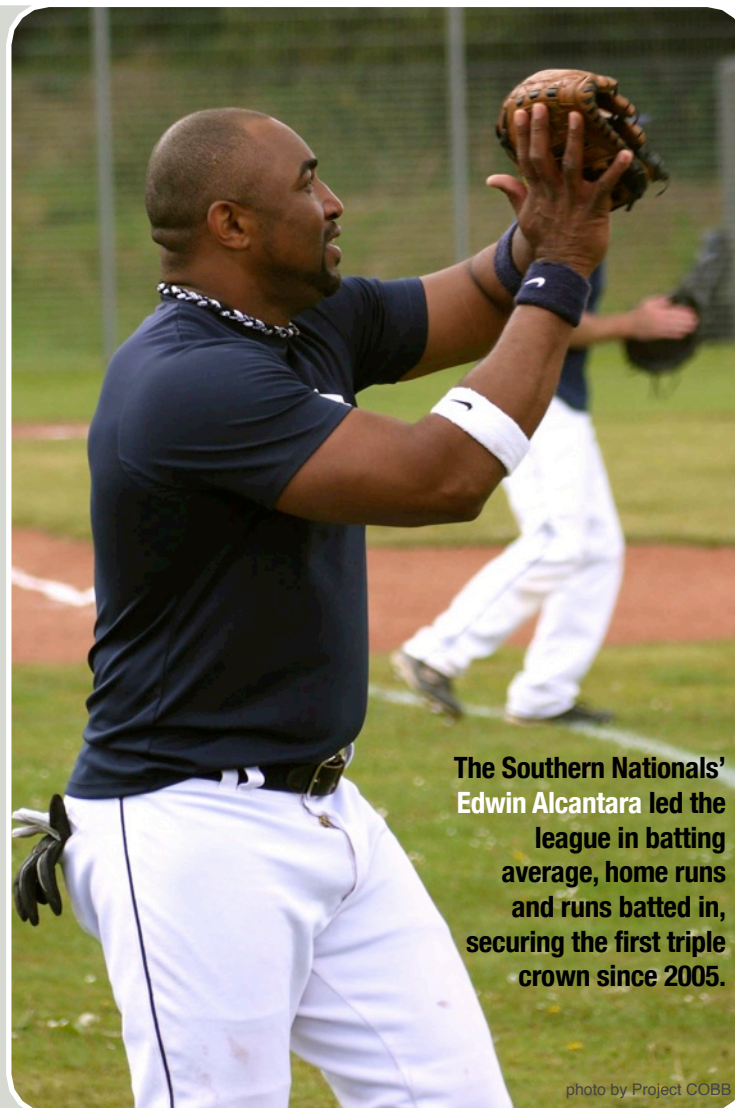
The reigning champions are aiming to join a host of clubs who have retained the title in recent seasons, and the current crop of players are easily capable of doing so. Robbie Unsell leads the hitting and pitching statistics in many categories and the team around him are playing as well, if not better, than last term. Almost certain to be in the NBC final, if not to win the whole thing.

### Southampton Mustangs

After a scorching start, the Mustangs had ensured their post-season place by early July. In only their second NBL summer they have made the playoffs again, and their appearance at the NBCs is a welcome addition to the schedule given the history of the club. They have a modest record against the other playoff teams, but have put lesser clubs to the sword and on their day could upset anyone.

### Southern Nationals

The Nationals are another team marking its debut season with a playoff appearance. They have swept past lesser teams with aplomb and claim to be the only side to sweep the Diamondbacks, proving that it can be done. In home-run hitting Edwin Alcantara they have one of the strongest sluggers in the league and will be hoping his class kicks in when the NBCs come around.



**The Southern Nationals'**  
**Edwin Alcantara** led the  
league in batting  
average, home runs  
and runs batted in,  
securing the first triple  
crown since 2005.





photo by [www.event-photos.co.uk](http://www.event-photos.co.uk)

## AAA

### **Liverpool Trojans**

The Trojans have gone unbeaten in league play all season and suffered only one defeat against Croydon Pirates team that resembled an NBL all-star outfit in the final of the London Tournament. In veteran Martin Godsall they have the winningest pitcher in British Baseball (10 wins), along with Rob Vondy second in the rotation, and a strong hitting line-up to boot. Last year they finished runners-up, but they are fancied to go one better in 2011.

### **Bristol Badgers**

Starting off in imperious form, the Badgers didn't lose until the fifth week of the season, and haven't lost much since. They have mixed pitching duties among six starters and have hit throughout the line-up, both for power and average. After a disappointing 2010 they have bounced back and brought real competition to the division, and should fare well.

### **Essex Redbacks**

60 years of pitching experience bolsters the Redbacks, as with Vince Warner and John Read the Essex club have two of the most well-known hurlers in the Southern divisions. The average age of the team is pushing 35, but they have played with the eagerness and energy of teenagers and could be an outside shot at the title.

### **Oxford Kings**

After stunning everyone in 2010 by picking up the AAA National crown, the Kings ran into trouble by falling to 6-9 in the first half of the season. But they reapplied themselves and picked up 11 consecutive wins to get to the playoffs, giving themselves every chance of retaining their title; Santo Bains' Kings really don't want to abdicate just yet.

# MEET THE COMPETITION

## AA

### Bolton Robots of Doom

But for a couple of defeats, the Robots of Doom have been impeccable all season. Even when the going got tough, the Bolton club picked up the victories. A .900 record isn't unheard of, but it's still a remarkable feat and few will relish having to take them on at any stage in the postseason.

### Latin Boys

The hard-throwing league debutants have impressed their opposition at every stage this year and represent a genuinely exciting addition to British Baseball. Playing with flair and style, passion and great talent, the Latin Boys have made many friends en route to the playoffs, but won't care who they upset if they can pick up the AA crown.

## Single-A

### Cambridge Royals

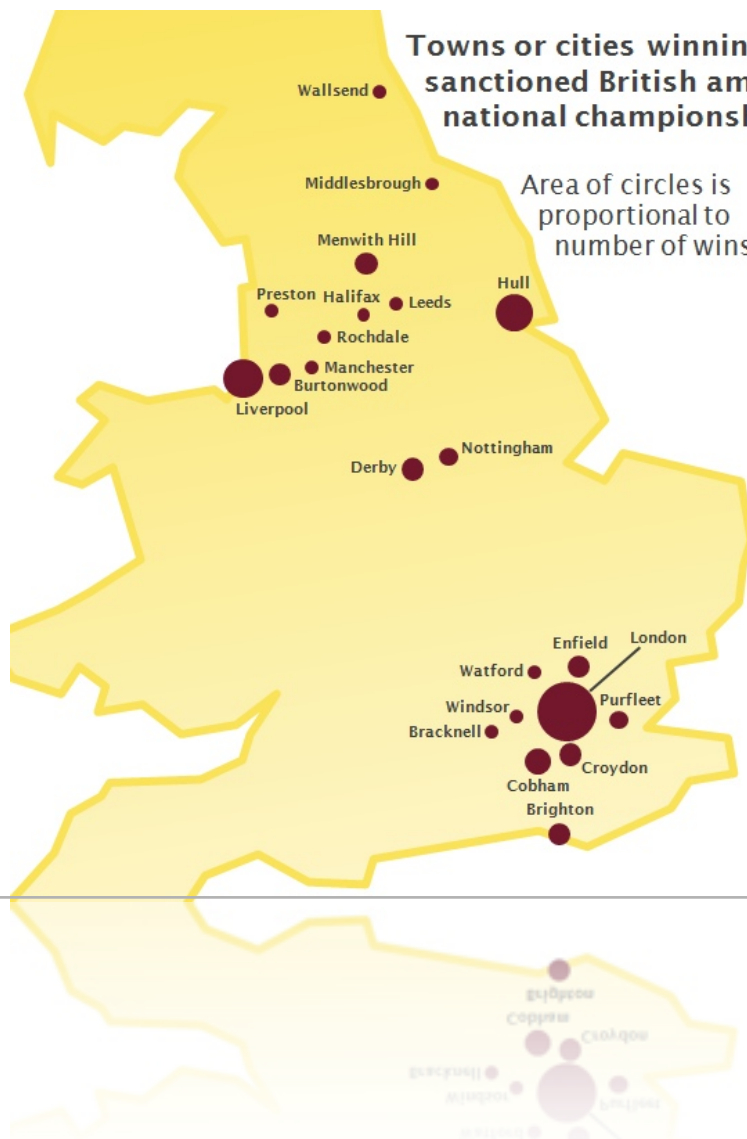
In their first year the Cambridge Royals have stunned the league with a perfect record, going unbeaten in 13 games and sweeping aside their closest rivals as easily as their division's cannon fodder. Highly fancied to do some damage at Hemel on the weekend.

### Birmingham Maple Leafs

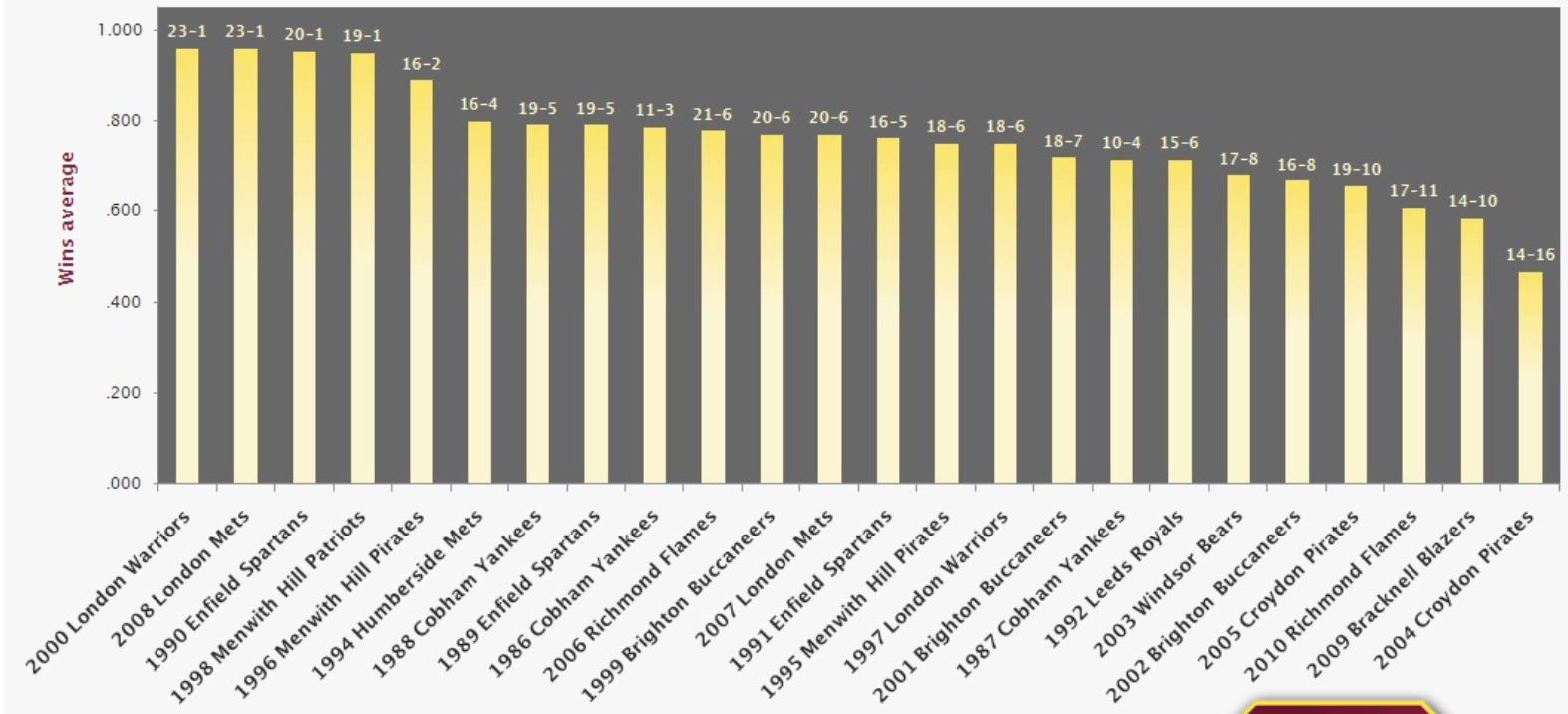
The Birmingham Maple Leafs missed out on the AA playoffs by two and a half games with an 11-8 record, meaning they're one of the best-placed sides in the single-A draw. Though they won't find the going easy, they'll hope to replicate the MK Bucks' run to the NBCs in the same competition last year.

## Towns or cities winning sanctioned British amateur national championships

Area of circles is proportional to number of wins



# REGULAR SEASON RECORDS OF TEAMS WINNING SANCTIONED NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS SINCE 1986



**Project COBB** is an online collaboration that was founded by BBF Life Member Joe Gray in 2008. Project COBB works to research and publish historical details of British baseball, including statistical insights and photography of the game in the United Kingdom.

[www.projectcobb.org.uk](http://www.projectcobb.org.uk)

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## No Olympic place, but 2012 can still be golden for British baseball

by **Matt Smith** *Editor, [BaseballGB.co.uk](http://BaseballGB.co.uk)*

With no international football tournament involving England and a one-sided cricket Test series against India, much of the hype in British sports this summer concerned action that will take place in a year's time.

The anticipation for the London 2012 Olympic Games increased as venues started to take shape, tickets were sold and Mayor of London Boris Johnson made another typically eccentric speech or three about Brits inventing 'wiff-waff'.

Hosting the Olympics on these shores is undoubtedly an exciting prospect, but for baseball and softball fans it's also a slightly demoralising one. As the event gets nearer and becomes ever more tangible, so the disappointment grows that the two sports will not be a part of it. While it would be too hopeful to have predicted a surge in publicity for the sports, there's no doubt that the kudos and exposure would have been a real boost.

As it is, the only time baseball got much of a mention in the British press this summer was when shopkeepers were buying up baseball bats to protect their stock from rioters.

However, much like the community-minded folk who quickly got to work in clearing up some of that carnage, now is not the time to sit back and bemoan our bad luck. Regardless of the International Baseball Federation's efforts to get the sport reinstated to the Olympic programme, there is reason to be hopeful about baseball's future.

The 2011 season offered plenty of signs for encouragement here.

The most obvious, but potentially most important, task for the British baseball community is to get out there and show people that the sport is played and enjoyed here in Britain.

The London Mets continued to run 'Baseball 4 Beginners' courses in Central London with the support of BaseballSoftballUK and added to it this year by introducing mid-week baseball. Wednesday night sessions at Finsbury Park gave people a chance to play while making the most of the early evening

light. If the Daylight Saving Bill ever comes to anything and we shift to 'double summer time', adding an extra hour of sunlight in the evenings would provide even more incentive for other clubs to follow suit.

The year also saw the emergence of several new teams, be it existing clubs adding additional teams - such as the Guildford Mavericks and Essex Redbacks - or completely new clubs coming into being.

A number of players from the Leicester Blue Sox club moved on to form new teams this year, principally Shannon Henry leading the Nottingham Rebels and Adam Brown playing a key role in the revival of the Cambridge Royals. Such departures will always leave a gap, but in the long term these and similar efforts will hopefully mean the development of more clubs built on strong foundations that can spread the sport into new areas.

The Rebels and Royals both had successful regular seasons this year and you can be sure that the Blue Sox will bounce back while continuing their great work in bringing baseball to Leicester.

New teams are putting new facilities in place - or taking on and improving fields in the case of the Southern Nationals in Harlow - a 'show diamond' venue in the Thames Valley is still on the cards, while fingers are firmly crossed that housing development plans will not see the Liverpool Trojan's long tenure at Bootle Stadium come to an end. The importance of retaining, improving and adding to our facilities is perfectly illustrated by the National Baseball Championship host venue, which has emerged as an excellent site through several years of hard work by Herts Baseball Club.

And while there isn't an Olympic tournament to look forward to, or the funding that would come with it, the Great Britain senior team qualified for the 2012 European Championships and will have a World Baseball Classic qualifying event to look forward to at the end of next year.

So while 2012 may be the year of the Olympics, it can still be a great year for British baseball. We'll leave Boris to the wiff-waff and keep on building baseball in the UK.



photo by sa-images.com

# NATIONAL CHAMPIONS OF BRITISH BASEBALL.

1890	Preston North End	1959	Thames Board Mills	1985	Hull Mets
1892	Middlesborough	1960	Thames Board Mills	1986	Cobham Yankees
1893	Thespians (London)	1961	Liverpool Tigers	1987	Cobham Yankees
1894	Thespians (London)	1962	Liverpool Tigers	1988	Cobham Yankees
1895	Derby	1963	East Hull Aces	1989	Enfield Spartans
1896	Wallsend-On-Tyne	1964	Hull Aces	1990	Enfield Spartans
1897	Derby	1965	Hull Aces	1991	Enfield Spartans
1899	Derby	1966	Stretford Saints	1992	Leeds City Royals
1900	Nottingham Forest	1967	Liverpool Yankees	1993	Humberside Mets
1906	Tottenham Hotspur	1968	Hull Aces	1994	Humberside Mets
1907	Clapton Orient	1969	Watford Sun-Rockets	1995	Menwith Hill Pirates
1908	Tottenham Hotspur	1970	Hull Royals	1996	Menwith Hill Pirates
1909	Clapton Orient	1971	Liverpool Tigers	1997	London Warriors
1910	Brentford	1972	Hull Aces	1998	Menwith Hill Patriots
1911	Leyton	1973	Burtonwood Yanks	1999	Brighton Buccaneers
1934	Hatfield (Liverpool)	1974	Nottingham Lions	2000	London Warriors
1935	New London	1975	Liverpool Tigers	2001	Brighton Buccaneers
1936	White City (London)	1976	Liverpool Trojans	2002	Brighton Buccaneers
1937	Hull	1977	Golders Green Sox	2003	Windsor Bears
1938	Rochdale Greys	1978	Liverpool Trojans	2004	Croydon Pirates
1939	Halifax	1979	Golders Green Sox	2005	Croydon Pirates
1948	Liverpool Robins	1980	Liverpool Trojans	2006	Richmond Flames
1949	Hornsey Red Sox	1981	London Warriors	2007	London Mets
1950	Burtonwood Bees	1982	London Warriors	2008	London Mets
1951	Burtonwood Bees	1983	Cobham Yankees	2009	Bracknell Blazers
		1984	Croydon Blue Jays	2010	Richmond Flames

## MOST NATIONAL TITLES

- 5 – Hull Aces (1972, 1968, 1965, 1964, 1963)
- 4 – London Warriors (2000, 1997, 1982, 1981)
- 4 – Cobham Yankees (1988, 1987, 1986, 1983)
- 4 – Liverpool Tigers (1975, 1971, 1962, 1961)
- 3 – Brighton Buccaneers (2002, 2001, 1999)
- 3 – Menwith Hill Pirates/Patriots (1998, 1996, 1995)
- 3 – Enfield Spartans (1991, 1990, 1989)
- 3 – Liverpool Trojans (1980, 1978, 1976)
- 3 – Derby (1898, 1897, 1895)

**YOUTH  
NATIONAL BASEBALL  
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

17-18 September  
Richmond, London



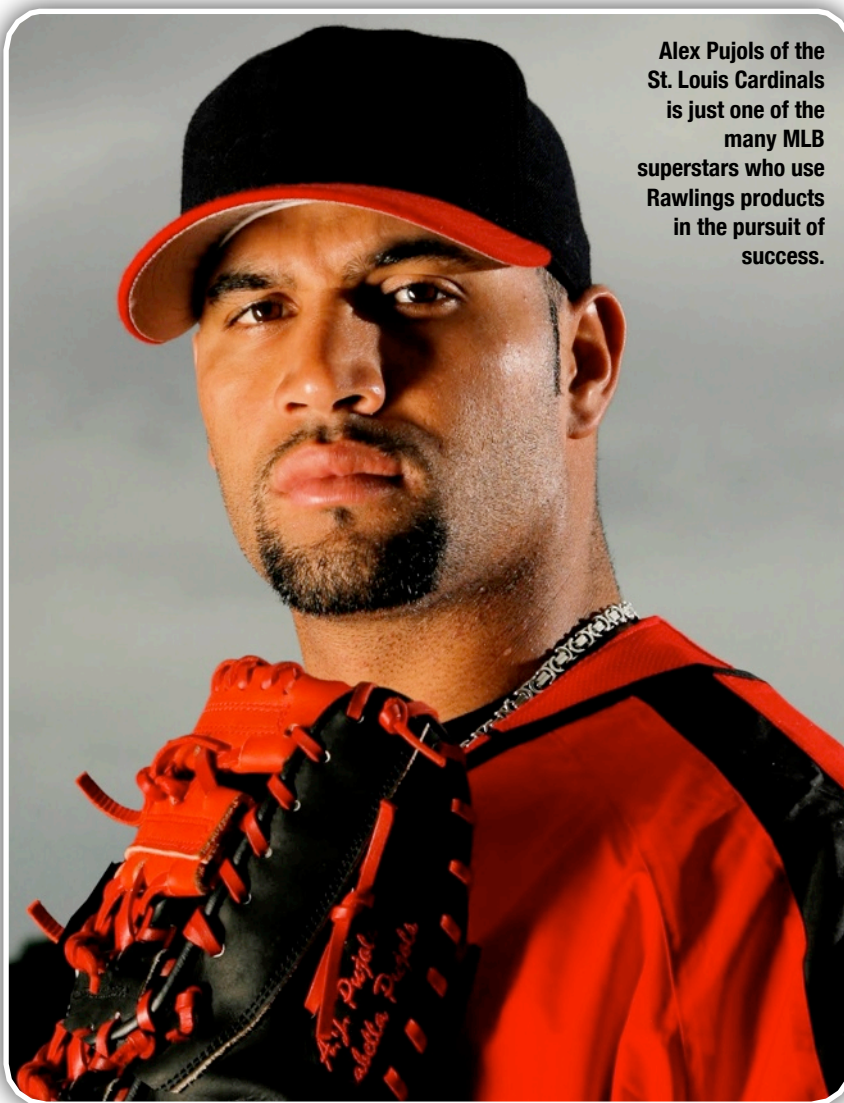
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Alex Pujols of the  
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is just one of the  
many MLB  
superstars who use  
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in the pursuit of  
success.



## TITLE CONTENDERS

### National Baseball League

Richmond Flames (19-5)

Lakenheath Diamondbacks (19-5)

Southampton Mustangs (17-7)

Southern Nationals (14-10)

### AAA League

Liverpool Trojans (22-0)

Bristol Badgers (19-5)

Essex Redbacks (21-9)

Halton Jaguars (10-9)

### AA League

Latin Boys (19-2)

Bolton Robots of Doom (19-3)

### Single-A League

Cambridge Royals (12-0)

Birmingham Maple Leafs (12-8)

The 2011 National Baseball Championships are hosted by Great Britain Baseball.



# NATIONAL BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

September 10-11 Grovehill Playing Fields, Hemel Hempstead



[www.britishbaseball.org](http://www.britishbaseball.org)

