

International Players

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International players generally must be signed either as free agents or through the posting system for Japanese players. However, two groups of international players are eligible for the First Year Player Draft: 1) Canadian players, and 2) non-residents who attend high school or college in the United States.

Foreign-born players from the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia and other countries are free agents. They may sign with any of the 30 Major League clubs during the international signing period, which runs from July 2 to August 31. To be eligible to sign a contract, a player must be 16 years old at the time of signing and turn 17 years old by either 1) September 1 or 2) the end of his first professional season, whichever is later.

Japanese high school players are subject to the Japan League draft and may not sign with U.S. clubs. Japanese League players may not become free agents until they have 10 years of service. Players who want to play in the Major Leagues before qualifying for free agency must go through the "posting process," a system that allows a Japanese club to solicit bids from Major League clubs for negotiating rights with the player.

A Japanese club first must "post" the player for bidding between November 1 and March 1 (see [US-Japanese Player Contract Agreement](#)). Interested Major League clubs then have four business days to submit blind bids, and the Japanese club then has four business days to accept or reject the high bid. The high bidder wins exclusive rights to negotiate with the player for the next 30 days. If the player signs, the Japanese team receives the posting bid. If the player does not sign, the bid money is refunded to the Major League club, and the player may not be posted again for a year.