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## Series ready for prime time debut

ESPN2, lighting company prepare 'Red' Owens Complex for TV cameras

By Scott Keeper

STAFF WRITER

skeeper@greenvillenews.com

EASLEY -- When Big League Baseball World Series tournament director Jon Humphrey received a call from Little League headquarters last winter asking whether he'd be interested in a prime time television spot, he pondered the question about as long as Albert Pujols ponders a fat, high fastball.

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Jeff Menz, a lighting technician with Musco Lighting of Oskaloosa, Iowa, sets up a temporary bank of lights Tuesday at the J.B. "Red" Owens Recreation Complex in Easley. (JOHN C. STEVENSON/Staff)

"I said, 'Let me think ...yes!' " Humphrey said. "We immediately started revising our game schedule."

Since that day, Humphrey's battle cry has been "Prime Time in '09," and that's precisely what will unfold this evening when the BLBWS championship game airs on ESPN2 at 8 p.m.

The title game has received live ESPN coverage each of the past two years, but this is the first time it has been afforded a prime time slot.

Two large trucks arrived Tuesday as the J.B. "Red" Owens Recreation Complex was transformed into a TV camera-ready facility. The main priority was additional lighting, which came in the form of two large banks of lights -- one down the third-base line, the other beyond the right-field fence -- designed to bathe the field in complete light for tonight's broadcast.

Unfortunately for local fans, this also will be the second time in the past seven years an Upstate team -- either the S.C. District 1 host team or District 7 from Greenville -- won't be in the championship game.

But that's of little consequence to Robert Clark and the 14 players on his Easley Little League team, who plan to attend tonight's championship.

"They're really looking forward to being there," said Clark, whose team recently won the state Junior League (13-14) championship and will vie for a regional title

next week. "They'll come walking out with their state banner, and that's a big deal. They're looking forward to showing it off in front of the home crowd."

In fact, any Little Leaguer who wears his or her Little League jersey with the official patch on the sleeve will be admitted free to tonight's game and will be recognized.

"That's what it's all about -- these kids and building up the league and getting more people excited about it," Clark said. "And of course the plan is for them to be playing Big League in a few years."

Dave Ryan and Kyle Peterson return to announce the game for the second consecutive year. Ryan, best known for his coverage of hockey and bowling, will do the play-by-play while Peterson -- a former major leaguer and All-American pitcher at Stanford -- will contribute the color commentary.

Scott Keeper can be reached at 298-4397.