

# Sports-Starved Fans Around the World Tune in as Korean Baseball Season Starts

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The Korea Baseball Organization started the long-awaited regular season on Tuesday, drawing unusual attention from sports fans in countries around world where sports leagues remain suspended due to the coronavirus pandemic.

U.S. network ESPN broadcast Korean baseball games live for the first time, and although broadcasting started at 1 a.m. U.S. Eastern Time, many sports fans posted scenes from games with messages like "I missed baseball so much," "Thanks to the KBO" and "My insomnia is cured."



A baseball season opener between Doosan Bears and LG Twins is played without spectators at a stadium in Jamsil, Seoul on Tuesday.

Journalists from about 20 foreign media outlets including the Los Angeles Times, Japan's Nippon TV and Qatar-based news channel Al Jazeera visited stadiums in Seongnam, Incheon, where season openers were played without spectators.

The Los Angeles Times correspondent Victoria Kim said she wanted to see "how you conduct a baseball season in the time of a global pandemic." She also wondered how fans would show their support. Spectators are still not allowed into stadiums.

Takuro Amagasaki from Nippon TV said he could see that COVID-19 prevention measures such as temperature checks and wearing masks were being taken very seriously. He also added that Japanese baseball fans are happy as they can watch Korean games on SPOZONE, the Japanese sports website.

Visiting the stadium in Incheon, Rob McBride from Al Jazeera asked Youm Kyoung-young, manager of SK Wyverns, how he felt about the international interest in the Korean baseball season. "I'm glad to get such attention thanks to Korean people's high awareness of civic responsibilities," Youm said.