



BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

Home of Babe Ruth Baseball,
Softball, and Cal Ripken Leagues



Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

MINUTES

March 9, 2014

Warrenton-Fauquier Visitors Center
33 N. Calhoun Street
Warrenton, Virginia

In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner
Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer
Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner
Phil Larcomb, Asst. State Comm., T&C
John Kemper, Fauquier League (D9)
Shannon Coffey, Springfield League (D13)
Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Commissioner
Kevin Brooks, Greater Fairfax League (D13)

John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Opns.
Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm., Softball Opns.
Glenn Spangler, District 4 SB Comm.
Dave Cogar, District 8 BB Comm.
Gayle Clary, Asst District 2 Comm.
Dennis Cobb, Asst. District 4 BB Comm.
Don Rose, Jr., Umpire in Chief
Larry Pritchett, District 5 BB Commissioner

Paul Link called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Tommy Clary offered the invocation, asking that the Board carry out its deliberations with particular attention to the impacts of its decisions on the State's players, their enjoyment of the game, and their opportunities for strong character development.

By unanimous vote, the reading of the minutes was waived.

Dave Gushee reported that the State treasury contained, as of 3/9/14, \$13,837.93 in the checking account, a \$1,000.00 bridge loan to Greater Fairfax Babe Ruth League to help them over an internal financial restructuring, 1,650.453 shares of Lord Abbett Balanced Strategy Fund valued at \$20,680.18, 293.305 shares of Hartford Balanced Income Fund valued at \$3,886.29, 54.637 shares of Oppenheimer Developing Markets Fund valued at \$2,001.90, 1,703.453 shares of Oppenheimer Rising Dividend Fund valued at \$29,983.20, and 161.07 shares of Goldman Sachs Growth and Income Strategy Fund valued at \$1,979.55. Total assets as of 3/9/14 = \$77,182.36. The Funds values are as of February 28, 2014. Last year at this time, total assets were \$68,006.15, of which \$1,776.2 were being held in escrow for Warren County Babe Ruth League, which had suspended operations several years ago. The funds held in escrow for Warren County Babe Ruth League were returned to that league as it is returning to active status this year.

The growth in assets is primarily the result of an increase in stock prices and a major contribution from an anonymous donor.

So far this year, 7 leagues have paid their 2014 State dues.

Old Business

General Discussion. Paul Link reported that attendees at the Southeast Region Spring Meeting last week were very complimentary about the quality of the Virginia organization's procedures and policies.

Committee on Updating Posted State Policies and Bylaws. John DeYoung reviewed the Committee's report, including proposed rewording of all the State's official policies. The Executive Committee recommended that the Board accept the Committee's report, approve the revised policy statements, and have them posted on the State Web site. The Board VOTED to approve the revised policy statements and post them on the Web site.

Aside from rewording for clarity, the major change is to remove Policy 1002 on Housing Requirements (no longer relevant). A major issue with respect to Policy 1004, concerning handling of cases where teams drop out of tournament competition at the last minute was handled later in the meeting (See "No-Show Teams at State Tournaments" below).

Committee on Reviewing District Alignments and Overlapping Territories. Dave Cogar reported that this committee has not been able to complete its assignment due to heavy demands on committee members from their jobs but that it is gearing up now. Paul Link reported that Henry Sermons, Southeast Regional Commissioner, has imposed three requirements on overlapping (sometimes called "soft") boundaries (areas from which more than one league can draw players): (1) The names of the leagues in the shared territory must reflect the whole territory ("Greater" Podunk, for example, Podunk being a town within the area larger than the town); (2) the District Commissioner must approve the boundaries of the overlapping area and the names of the leagues involved; and (3) players can choose which league they will play for *through an appeal process, if necessary).

The Committee will report its recommendations at the Fall meeting.

Committee on New Program(s) To Attract More Players and/or More Leagues.

Paul Link reported that this committee has not yet been formally formed. Since the meeting last Fall at which the committee was created, two potential opportunities have come to our attention.

There is a group in Ward 7 in Washington, DC, that would like to field at least one team but needs mentoring, playing fields, and funding. The area is within Maryland's boundaries, but Maryland has no plans to be active in the District. Virginia could request that the District be added to Virginia's territory. Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia is

prepared to fund activities designed to bring more players and teams into its program. The Board agreed that this possibility be explored further.

There has been some interest expressed from time to time that a league could be created in the Counties west of Lexington along I-64, which includes Clifton Forge and Covington. District 4 borders this area; there has been contact from time to time over the years, but there has been no substantial effort directed toward quantifying the potential. Glenn Spangler offered to look into what is active there.

Status of Don Rose Memorial Umpire Scholarship Fund. Don Rose, Jr. reported that the Fund has applied for and been granted an IRS Employer Identification Number (EIN), a step in the process toward nonprofit status, so that contributions to it are now tax deductible. Incorporation is the next step. The immediate goal is to award one recent high school graduate per year funding to assist that person in progressing toward attending professional umpiring school. Fund-raising will now begin in earnest. Rose is negotiating with Loudoun County school officials for an annual tournament among all 14 Loudoun County high schools, with the proceeds to be donated to the Fund.

New Business

Preferred Communication Methods. Paul Link asked how Board members and other key volunteers preferred to be communicated with when a rapid response is needed. Most replied that they preferred the cell phone over email. Gushee, the oldster, prefers email; that's one of the consequences of being set in one's ways before the I-Phone revolution.

Status of League Charters. As of 3/9/14, 44 leagues have had their charters accepted and have been billed for State dues, out of a total of around 70 in the State. 70 is an estimate, as one or more leagues chartered last year may not renew or may merge with a neighboring league, and some new leagues are planning to join us.

On-Line Rosters. Paul Link reported that Virginia was the only State in the country to have 100% of its leagues' rosters on line last year. But there were lots of last-minute maneuvers to make that happen. He urged the District Commissioners to try to get their leagues to get their rosters on line earlier – the rules say they are supposed to be turned in before the first game is played. He recognizes that last minute exigencies arise.

Paul asked that special effort be made to get the regular season rosters in much earlier than has historically been the case. He will be out of the country from June 21 to July 1 and thus not available to sign off on Letters of Eligibility during that time. John DeYoung will act in his stead in that period.

Checks for Charter Fees and Insurance in One Envelope. Separate checks are still required, but they can be submitted together this year.

Rule Changes for 2014. These are posted on the Babe Ruth Web site at:

<http://baberuthleague.org/latest-rule-changes.aspx> . Among the rule changes are those affecting the Extra Player and Designated Hitter in the 13-15 and 16-18 Divisions respectively; Background Checks are now Required for all Divisions; Dropped Third Strike at the Ripken Major 60 Division; Softball 10U Pitching Limitations Raised to 9 Innings; and an additional Balk Rule for Cal Ripken Major 70, Babe Ruth 13-15, and Babe Ruth 16-18 Divisions.

Background Check Status. Some leagues have had trouble accessing the system Babe Ruth has favored. The Department of Justice sexual predator list has proven to be readily accessible, and there is no fee associated with using it. Its address is listed on the Babe Ruth Web site.

Babe Ruth Banners for District and State Champions. Babe Ruth suggests these make impressive displays on, for example, outfield fences to promote the success of the league's teams in tournament competition. The Board VOTED to purchase banners for Virginia league State Champions for one year to see how they are received.

State Baseball Tournament Sites. With the decisions taken earlier, these have all now been finalized. The finalized list will be put on the State Web site.

With the 16-18 World Series date set so early in August, the local league season will be shortened to as little as 3 weeks for players on high school teams in post-season play. It was VOTED to set up a second, non-tournament trail 16-18 Invitational State Tournament starting July 17, so that leagues will be able to have a meaningful season with enough games to make it worth participating for the players. Eligibility rules and host league will be determined as soon as possible.

State Softball Tournament Sites. Varina will host all the State softball tournaments. Discussions are still ongoing on the choice between double elimination and pool play for some age levels.

Status of State Tournament Contracts and Payment of State Host Fees. Two host leagues have signed baseball contracts and paid the host fees. Contracts and invoices for the rest of the tournaments (other than the 16-18s Invitational) have been transmitted to the host leagues.

Assignment of State Representatives to State Tournaments.

Baseball

Rookies	Shenandoah County	Ken Bosserman, Glenn Spangler
9s	Williamsburg	Brandon Currence
10s	Rappahannock	John Kemper, John DeYoung
11s/60	Northeast Augusta	Glenn Spangler, Ken Bosserman
11s/70	Arlington Optimists	Dave Cogar

12s/60	Northeast Augusta	Glenn Spangler, Ken Bosserman
12s/70	Northside	Larry Pritchett
13s	Northern Fairfax County	John DeYoung, Paul Link
14s	Spotsylvania	Larry Pritchett
13-15s	Sandston	Curtis Moore, Don Gowen
16-18s	Colonial Heights	Tommy Clary

Softball

6U	Not Scheduled	
8U	Varina	Don Gowen
10U	Varina	Don Gowen
12U	Varina	Don Gowen
14U	Varina	Don Gowen
16U	Varina	Don Gowen
18U	Not Scheduled	

Champions Day at Washington Nationals Park. On Saturday, September 6, the Washington Nationals will invite all the Babe Ruth Virginia State Champion Teams onto the field to be recognized. The game, against the Philadelphia Phillies, is scheduled to begin at 4:05 p.m. [After the State meeting, we learned from the Washington Nationals that in 2014 they will be honoring three Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken age groups on Champions Day: 12-Year-olds 60-foot baseball, 12-Year-olds 70 foot baseball, and 12-and-Under softball (see www.nationals.com/championsday for details).]

Don Rose Memorial Buddy-Ball Invitational Tournament. Williamsburg has expressed an interest in holding this event, probably in May. Medallions and other memorabilia will be provided. Detailed information on this event is available by clicking on the Buddy-Ball logo on the State Web site.

2014 Southeast Regional Tournaments in Virginia

Baseball: The Southeast Regional 12-60s Tournament will be held in Staunton. The 13-15s will be held in Sandston.

2014 World Series in Virginia

Baseball: The 10s World Series will be held in Winchester. The 13s World Series will be held in Glen Allen

Umpire Assignments for District and State Tournaments. Don Rose, Jr., will work closely with District Commissioners and Tournament Directors to identify and schedule umpires, all of whom must be certified by both National Umpires Association (NUA) and Virginal Babe Ruth Umpires Association (VBRUA).

Trophies, Plaques, and Patches. Ken Bosserman reported that the prices this year will

be held even. There will be a slight redesign of the columns, to distinguish this year's trophies from those of years past.

Virginia Umpires Association. Fees will remain the same. The Parents Team Gate Pass Calculation table for 2014 State Baseball and Softball Tournaments is posted on the State Web site. Larry Pritchett asked if a per-game field use fee could be incorporated into the calculation of the fee for the parents of each team. The State policy (#1001) does not include this expense and states that "No other items can be considered in this calculation without approval of the Executive Committee." It was not determined at the meeting if the host league will make a request to the Executive Committee on this issue. Dave Cogar asked if a similar consideration of utility costs might be considered in the same way.

Scorebooks as Part of State Tournament Credentials for 12-70s, 13-15s, and 16-18s. The Southeast Region policy of requiring that the actual scorebooks accompany these teams to their Regional Tournaments has been continued. This will also be required for Virginia State Tournament teams, starting this year.

No-Show Teams at State Tournaments. This problem has occurred often enough over the years that the Board has concluded that a clear policy dealing with it would be helpful. A variety of options has been considered for the past several meetings. At this meeting, the Board VOTED to put in place the following policy:

Sanctions against Leagues

When a team fails to show up for a tournament game, or pulls out of a tournament before it is done, it affects the tournament and its participants in many ways. Some of these are:

Loss of revenue for the host

Teams spending idle days in hotels, or traveling when they didn't have to

Rescheduling problems

Pool play standings unfairly affected

Any team in the State of Virginia who fails to report to or to complete all of the team's scheduled games in the State Tournament shall be assessed a "Reinstatement Fee" of three hundred and fifty dollars (\$350.00), to be paid to Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc., within sixty days of assessment notification. Three hundred dollars (\$300.00) will be distributed to the Tournament Host and fifty dollars (\$50.00) will be placed in the Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. general funds. Failure to comply will result in the suspension of tournament eligibility of the offending league at all age levels for a period of two (2) years.

The "Reinstatement Fee" may be waived only by the Virginia State Commissioner, under the following circumstances:

- a. The District Champion advises the District Commissioner immediately upon the completion of the District championship game that it will not move on and thereby vacates the Championship, whereupon the District Runner-Up becomes*

- the Champion and accepts the offer to attend the State Tournament as the District Representative. (This rule would then apply to the former District Runner-Up.)*
- b. Extenuating circumstances due to loss of life or natural disaster.*
 - c. At the discretion of the Virginia State Commissioner.*

Rookies Rules Review. Paul Link reminded the Board that the State will follow the Region's rules, so that the players going to the Regional Tournament will be accustomed to them.

Estimate of Teams from Each District in Each State Tournament. It's too early in the season for most leagues to be able to know for sure whether they will participate. John DeYoung will be reminding the District Commissioners to press their leagues for this information as the season progresses.

Waiver Process Review. The State has requested authority to grant approval for waiver requests for leagues with fewer than 4 teams (Rule 0.02) and teams with fewer than 12 players (Rule 0.05). When granted, the approval letter from Babe Ruth will be posted on the Virginia Web site, so any league needing such a waiver can follow the official waiver process described in the approval letter or in the associated note from the State Commissioner. This new procedure would apply only to these two waived rules. All other waiver requests must be made using the official waiver format (also on the Virginia Web site).

Illegal Bat Rule for Regional Tournaments. Southeast Region will eject not only the player identified using an illegal bat, but also the manager, for the remainder of the game in which the infraction took place. Virginia will only eject the player.

Bahamas National Anthem. The Bahamas are now part of the Southeast Region. At each game in which the Bahamas team plays, the Bahamas national anthem is to be played prior to the Star Spangled Banner. A conjecture arose that probably, one day, a Regional Tournament will be held in the Bahamas. This was met with some interest, but it is only a possibility at the moment.

State Tournament Host Workshop. At the recent Southeast Region Meeting, John Armentrout presented a training program for tournament directors in Southeast Region Tournaments. For Tournament Directors in Virginia State Tournaments, Phil Larcomb, Assistant State Commissioner for Training and Compliance, will hold one (or possibly two, one in the northern part and one in the southern part of the State). Phil provided an outline of the content of the proposed workshop and proposed dates in mid-May or early June. The Board VOTED to hold this workshop on May 17 and to press all State Tournament Directors to participate. League Presidents and potential District Tournament Directors are also urged to attend. Phil cited a number of variations in practice in tournaments throughout the State over time, variations which have led to arguments, flaring tempers, and other unpleasant consequences. The content of the Workshop is designed to help the Tournament Directors avoid such problems by alerting them to policies and practices that minimize their occurrence. The outline of the

Workshop content is attached to these Minutes.

Virginia Babe Ruth Umpires Association (VBRUA). As of the meeting, 25 baseball umpires, 6 softball umpires, and 15 baseball plus softball umpires had renewed their VBRUA membership. That's about 21% of those who were members last year.

Umpire Training.

George Burke and Bruce Frye have reported the umpire training schedule:

March 1 at Winchester	District 9	Baseball
March 2 at Glen Allen	District 3	Baseball
March 8 at Fishersville/Staunton	District 4	Baseball
March 9 at Falls Church	District 13	Baseball
March 15 at Ranson, WV	District 9	Baseball
March 15 at Stafford	District 8	Baseball
March 16 at Madison	District 5	Baseball
March 22 at Mechanicsville	District 3	Softball
March 22 at Herndon	District 13	Baseball
March 23 at Nokesville	District 8	Baseball
March 29 at Nokesville	District 8	Baseball
April 5 at Williamsburg	District 1	Baseball
April 15 at Summit Point, WV	District 8	Softball (date may change)

The New Babe Ruth Xtreme Fastpitch Softball Division. This has been started up. Its impact on us is not yet clear.

Concussion Training and Certification. Babe Ruth Headquarters has posted on one of its Facebook pages a link to an on-line training course dealing with concussions in youth sports. This is a free course provided by the Federal Government's Centers for Disease Control. There is a certification test at the end of the course and a printable certificate.

Paul Link took the course; it took him about 30 minutes. He says he learned a lot of good information. The link is http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html .

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer

Attachment: State Tournament Host Workshop Agenda