



Virginia

Babe Ruth Baseball & Softball



MINUTES
March 12, 2023
Courtyard by Marriott, Jefferson Meeting Room
638 Hillsdale Drive
Charlottesville, Virginia

In Attendance

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| Paul Link, State Commissioner | Billie Clark, District 5 Asst. Commissioner |
| Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer | Pat O'Brien, District 6 Baseball Commissioner |
| John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Operations | Sheri Zimmerman, District 7 Baseball Commissioner |
| Glenn Spangler, Asst. State Comm., Training | Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner |
| Robert Faherty, Senior V.P., Babe Ruth League, Inc. | John Kemper, District 9 Baseball Commissioner |
| Donny Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief | Lisa Kemper, District 9 Asst. Baseball Commissioner |
| Brian Eamigh, District 1 Asst. Baseball Commissioner | Chris Frazier, District 10 Commissioner |
| Tommy Clary, District 2 Baseball Commissioner | Michael Bouchard, President, Stafford Babe Ruth League |
| Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Baseball Commissioner | Paul Coates, Rockville Girls Softball |
| Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner | Steven Cohn, Director of Operations, Stafford Babe Ruth League |
| Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Commissioner | Michelle Gregory, President, West Augusta Baseball and Softball |
| Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Baseball Commissioner | Greg Phillips, President, South Augusta Cal Ripken League |
| Matt Clark, District 5 Commissioner | D.J. Stewart, President, Shenandoah Valley Babe Ruth League |

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Invocation: Tommy Clary offered the invocation, asking for prayers for those battling health issues and dedicating the day's business to the benefit of Virginia's baseball- and softball-playing kids.

Moment of silence: A moment of silence was requested for two Babe Ruth volunteers who passed away in the last year: Robert "Bob" Brown (Winchester), 2010 Babe Ruth Southeast Region Hall of Fame inductee, and Brian Ricks (Herndon-Reston).

A motion was approved to make a \$200 memorial contribution to the Babe Ruth Alumni Association in memory of Bob Brown and Brian Ricks.

Introduction of guests: Paul Link introduced Robert Faherty, Senior Vice President and National Commissioner, Babe Ruth League, Inc.

Roll call: Paul Link asked the District Commissioners and other attendees to introduce themselves.

Reading of minutes from the State Fall Meeting: By unanimous vote, the reading of the minutes of the 2022 State Fall Meeting was waived.

Treasurer's report: Phil Larcomb reported that the State treasury contained, as of March 11, 2023, \$5,600.10 in the checking account and \$57,602.80 in the mutual funds account for total cash and reserves of \$63,202.90. The accounts receivable balance was \$6,000.00. There were liabilities in the

amount of \$2,023.24. All 53 leagues that chartered have been billed. All baseball and softball State tournament contracts have been billed to date. All outstanding State fees are due by April 1, 2023.

OLD BUSINESS

Opening remarks and Commissioner's challenge: Paul Link mentioned that 24 new leagues have joined our State in the past 10 seasons with an additional five more leagues expected to join in 2023. Paul thanked the District Commissioners for adding the new leagues but also challenged each Commissioner to increase new leagues in their District. Paul offered to travel anywhere in the State to meet in person with any new league. Paul read a list of the potential new leagues in each District.

- **District 1:** Green Run Little League (Chesapeake, c/o Michelle Bancroft), Churchland Softball (Portsmouth), Southern Chesapeake Athletic Association and York County Little League (Yorktown)
- **District 2:** Hopewell (Tom Gates), South Hill Dixie Softball, and Amelia
- **District 3 & 5:** Cumberland County, Buckingham County, Nelson County, Appomattox County
- **District 4:** Staunton Softball
- **District 5:** Madison Softball, Orange County Parks & Rec (baseball and softball)
- **District 6:** Vienna Softball (Caffi Field), Alexandria Girls Softball
- **District 7:** Herndon Softball, Arlington Softball, Pioneer Softball
- **District 8:** Brentsville Softball
- **District 9:** Winchester Softball, Culpeper Softball
- **District 10:** Vinton Booster Club (Roanoke), Southwest Virginia Boys Baseball League (Wytheville)
- **District 11:** Lee Little League (Pennington Gap), Pound Little League (Rocky Cantrell), Russell County (Cedar Bluff, c/o Gary Boyd), Bristol (VA) (Charlie Perkins, softball), Union Little League (Big Stone Gap)

S.A.F.E. update (Sports Engine HQ): Paul Link mentioned that the Pass-Fail will be in real time and asked the leagues to verify that background checks (and abuse training) are current for all their volunteers and that their certificates are in hand. Commissioner renewals are not due until September to coincide with elections. Paul reminded all Commissioners and league presidents in attendance to not wait until the mad rush at the end of the season to post rosters online and complete Background Checks and Abuse Prevention Training. This is especially critical this season given the issues being experienced with the new SEHQ platform.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2023 budget: Phil Larcomb distributed a copy of the 2023 operating budget showing a line-by-line accounting of the projected income and expenditures for the current year. The goal of the handout was to be as transparent as possible with the State and District Commissioners. Phil mentioned that our mutual funds account suffered almost a 22% decrease in FY 2022. The current budget will allow for the State to continue the tradition of awarding World Series and league grants without using the investment account principal to fund these endeavors.

Election of the Assistant State Commissioner, Softball Operations: Paul Link nominated Paul Coates (Rockville Girls Softball) to fill the remaining time of Don Gowen's term as Assistant State Commissioner, Softball Operations. Phil Larcomb called for nominations from the floor. None were

received. Phil then moved that Paul Coates to be elected by acclamation. Paul Link then thanked Don Gowen for his many years of service to Babe Ruth Softball.

Bylaws revision: John DeYoung made a motion to amend the Bylaws by replacing “dues” with “fees” (11 times), replacing “Consultants” with “Advisors” (6 times), and replacing “Web” with “web” (once). The motion to revise the Bylaws was passed unanimously. The revised Bylaws will be posted on the Virginia Babe Ruth website.

Regional meeting report: Paul Link provided feedback on the Southeast Region meeting held on February 3–4, 2023, at Williamsburg, Virginia. The meeting minutes are posted at https://brlseregion.com/meetings/files/minutes_020323.pdf Paul highlighted the following from the SER meeting:

- Umpire food and drinks at tournaments
- Umpire caps and patches
- Plate umpire cannot be from local league when local team is playing
- Weather policy will be reemphasized with UICs and SER representatives. (The weather policy is posted on the Virginia Babe Ruth website: “Thunder & Lightning Guidelines” under the “Guidelines” tab.)

Team Checklist and Manager Conduct Certification Forms are posted in the Virginia Babe Ruth website’s Documents Center: <https://vababeruth.com/downloads/index.php>

Spectator conduct signs should be posted at District, Area, State, and Regional tournaments.

Handouts were distributed and discussed regarding the following Southeast Region Policies that are posted on the Regional website: 20221024 (revised), 20221025 (retired), 20231026 (new), and 20231027 (new).

Revised Southeast Region Rookie baseball and 8U softball rules are posted on the Southeast Region website and in the Virginia Babe Ruth website’s Documents Center. The significant change is that a team with only nine players available shall bat all nine players without the use of the EP and there shall be three outfielders.

Expanded warming up pitcher rule (standing or crouching) must wear mask.

Two pilot programs:

(1) The 2023 Cal Ripken Division Uniform Pilot Program information was distributed and is posted at https://brlseregion.com/tourney_site/index.php

(2) Virginia was granted permission to use coach pitch or manager operating machine at District and State tournaments (discussion and vote follows at end of meeting in the general discussion)

Volunteer of the Year (a new program) – eight Regions will have each a winner. Suggestions for selection criteria are being solicited—send to Paul Link.

“In the Dugout” webinar series: Monthly webinars on selected topics have been offered by Babe Ruth League, Inc. Email invitations are sent from Headquarters (Rob Connor). Paul urged all Commissioners to attend these presentations.

Babe Ruth National Hall of Fame: Rebecca Slough from Glen Allen will be inducted at the 13-Year-olds World Series in Glen Allen starting August 10. On another note, Virginia has 44% of the Southeast Region HoF Members. Paul Link reviewed the nomination procedures.

25-year volunteer pins: Paul reviewed the new Southeast Region online procedure to nominate 25-year volunteers for awards. Paul mentioned that Harry Yates of District 9 was recommended to receive his award, but the online form has not been received. A list of the Southeast Region Silver Club members is posted on the Southeast Region website: https://brlseregion.com/service/view_members.php

Status of 2023 league charters: Paul reported the following leagues still need to charter with Babe Ruth headquarters.

- **District 1:** Cradock, Williamsburg
- **District 2:** Brunswick, Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, South Hill
- **District 3** Metro Richmond, Sandston, Varina
- **District 6:** Alexandria Senior Babe Ruth
- **District 10:** Blacksburg, Floyd County, Giles, Montgomery County, Radford

New leagues for 2023: Paul Link reported the following new leagues:

- South of the James Ball Club adding Cal Ripken and 13-15 Babe Ruth
- Metro Junior (Richmond) returning with Cal Ripken (new) and Babe Ruth
- Riverheads Softball
- Charles City Softball
- Highland Springs (16-18)

Registration requirement of the Virginia Solicitation of Contributions (VSOC) Law: Dave Cogar and John DeYoung explained how a team’s complaint to the State Attorney General’s office over trophy size at an invitational baseball tournament last fall led to an email to the host league from the Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs (OCRCP) in the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services stating that any organization that solicits for donations (seeks sponsorships for the league, has a donate button on its website, holds fundraisers) is required to be registered with OCRCP pursuant to the Virginia Solicitation of Contributions Law. For many leagues, submitting the Virginia Exemption Application for Charitable or Civic Organization (Form 100) with a one-time exemption application fee of \$10 fulfills this requirement. The State’s Registered Charitable Organization Database can be searched and copies of the registration applications and copy of the VSOC Law can be obtained at <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/food-charitable-solicitation.shtml>

Baseball rule changes for 2023: John DeYoung summarized the baseball rule changes for the 2023 season, which include pitch count changes for some Cal Ripken age-group tournaments, allowing the wearing of jewelry, the elimination of the Cal Ripken Major60 World Series (there will be no Cal Ripken Major60 Southeast Region tournament, but there will be a Virginia State tournament), and increased tournament team administration fees. There was considerable discussion on why the fee for the 16-18s (\$200) was so much higher than for the 10s, 12s, 13s, 14s, and 13-15s (\$75).

Softball rule changes for 2023: Curtis Moore reviewed the softball rule changes for the 2023 season, which include increased tournament team administration fees, revisions to the pitching rule (8.02), removing the penalty of advancing a runner one base on an illegal pitch, and a change to the courtesy runner rule.

The 2023 rule changes for baseball and softball are posted at <https://baberruthleague.org/latest-rule-changes/2023-rule-changes.aspx> (this page can be accessed from the “Rule Changes” tab on the Virginia Babe Ruth website).

Regional and World Series tournament locations: Dates are posted in the Virginia Babe Ruth website’s Tournament Center: <https://vababeruth.com/tournaments/tournaments.php>

World Series in Virginia in 2023: The 13-Year-olds World Series will be held in Glen Allen and the 14-Year-olds World Series will be held in Stafford. Reminder: This means that the Virginia State Champion at these two age groups qualifies for the World Series and the State Runner-up and third-place teams advance to the Regionals.

Virginia tournament representation: Remember that, as approved by the Southeast Region, the Virginia State Champion and Runner-up at each age group (baseball and softball) advance to the Regional tournaments.

State tournament host training: Glenn Spangler and Paul Link will be coordinating the Tournament Director training to be held during the first two weekends in May 2023.

2023 Virginia State tournaments: State tournament start dates are posted in the Virginia Babe Ruth website’s Tournament Center: <https://vababeruth.com/tournaments/tournaments.php>

- 16-18 Area tournaments and State tournaments
 - Area July 6-9 sites tbd – declare by June 15
 - State July 13 Brunswick HS, Lawrenceville, VA (D2)
- Softball (dates and location)
 - State June 28 Manassas – declare by June 7

Tournament contract and host fee payment update: John DeYoung reported that host fees payments and signed contracts were due today and that 8 of the 11 State host leagues had met the deadline. Follow up with the remaining leagues was expected within the week.

Assignment of State tournament representatives: Paul Link reported that the assignments had been made and have been posted in the Virginia Babe Ruth website’s Tournament Center.

Waiver process review: A "blanket waiver request" for less than 4 teams in a league was approved by Headquarters. It is available for download from the State website. A waiver is no longer needed for less than 12 players on a team—that is no longer a rule, only a recommendation.

Buddy-Ball: Donny Rose announced that the State has a dedicated Buddy-Ball website and that he will be scheduling the events with each league this season. Donny asked for any league that has Buddy-Ball to contact him to schedule their event.

Umpire assignments for District and State tournaments: Donny Rose will work closely with Paul Link, District Commissioners, and Tournament Directors to identify and schedule umpires, all of whom must be certified by both the National Umpire Association (NUA) and the VBRUA.

Umpire training: Donny reported that five baseball umpire training sessions and two softball training sessions (Charlottesville, Staunton, Glen Allen, Falls Church, and Stafford) have already been held. 73 umpires, 24 coaches, and 6 league officials have been trained to date. There will be an additional two umpire clinics at Williamsburg and Manassas the weekend of March 24.

Parent Gate Pass Fee schedule for 2023 (baseball and softball): John DeYoung reviewed State Policy #1001, the Parents Gate Pass Program, which is a method of admission fees that is assessed on the parents of each team as a lump-sum calculated fee in lieu of having an admission gate for spectators. **It is not a team entry fee.** The District Champions and other participants in State tournaments shall be instructed by the District Commissioner that the Parents Gate Pass Program Fee be presented at book check-in time. This requirement is listed on the Tournament Team Checklist form specifying documents required to be in the tournament team's credentials book. The calculation of the Parents Gate Pass Program Fee is based on the cost of umpires (not counting the IF game), the cost of baseballs or softballs, and the State Hosting Fee. No other items are considered in this calculation. John explained that the Parents Gate Pass Program Fee (PGPPF) table for 2023 State baseball tournaments (played in the default double-elimination format) would be created when the input costs were determined. **When the number of participating teams is determined** for a State baseball tournament, John will enter the PGPPF amount in the MTIP if this option is chosen by the host league. A similar approach will be used for softball. For 2023 State tournaments played in pool-play format, the game schedule [number of pools, number of games, and single-elimination games (if any)] must be determined before the PGPPF can be calculated.

State Policy 1026 – Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Paul Link and John DeYoung reviewed the final language in the new State policy regarding player and/or coach conduct at any Virginia tournament. State Policy 1026 is now posted online.

Nominating Committee: Paul Link appointed the following individuals to solicit nominations for the FY2023-2025 Executive Board elections to be held on Sunday, September 24, 2023: Chris Frazier (Chair), Dave Cogar, and Curtis Moore.

Scholarship and grant programs: Paul reminded Commissioners to communicate the following application deadlines to their league presidents:

- Babe Ruth College Scholarship Program – June 30
- Jamie Horn Memorial Softball Scholarship – September 1
- Virginia Grant Program – September 1

All scholarship forms can be found and downloaded from the Virginia Babe Ruth website's Documents Center: <https://vababeruth.com/downloads/index.php>

General discussion:

The Cal Ripken Division Uniform Pilot Program handout was discussed and questions answered.

The Commissioners approved the pilot program for Rookie tournaments to allow the coaches to operate the pitching machine for their own teams. A policy will be announced for not allowing a batter a free base if he is hit by a pitch from his own coach operating the machine. It was mentioned that a coach adept at operating the machine could use this approach to gain a base runner.

The decision was finalized to reassign South of the James Ball Club from District 3 to District 5.

There was much discussion on alternative tournaments for smaller leagues whose teams get eliminated immediately from their District tournaments by the powerhouse leagues. This will be a work in progress to solicit hosts for these additional invitational tournaments.

John DeYoung followed up on the following issue from the 2022 State Fall Meeting minutes:

“... the change to Rule 11.06, paragraph 7, on page 29 of the 2022 Babe Ruth baseball rule book creates major problems for drawing tournament brackets at the State level. Rule 11.06, paragraph 7, on page 29 of the 2021 Babe Ruth baseball rule book states that ‘The host teams for all Divisions of baseball having received eligibility approval from Babe Ruth League, Inc., and at their league president’s discretion, shall be eligible to enter official tournament competition one level below the tournament level they will be hosting.’ In the 2022 Babe Ruth baseball rule book, ‘... official tournament competition one level below the tournament level they will be hosting.’ in Rule 11.06, paragraph 7, was changed to ‘... official tournament-trail competition beginning at the District tournament level.’ This (and the subsequent part of the rule: ‘If a State or Regional host team participates in an official tournament trail competition prior to its first game as host team and wins, both it and the second-place team will advance to the next level. If the host team loses in an official tournament-trail competition prior to its first game as host team, it will be eligible to participate as the host.’) means that for age groups for which a State is hosting a Regional tournament, the number of teams in the State tournament cannot be determined until the Regional host is either eliminated from or wins the District tournament, which in some instances is only 2 or 3 days before the State tournament starts.

“Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. Policy 1004 allows the drawing of State brackets 3 weeks before the start of each State tournament to afford participants ample time to plan travel and make hotel arrangements. The MTIP for Virginia State tournaments states that ‘All managers, coaches, and players are to report at least 1 hour (baseball) or 2 hours (softball) prior to their first game for check-in and pregame warm-ups.’ In order to maintain this situation and not require teams to plan to report on the first day of the State tournament when their first game may turn out to be the following day, John proposed that Virginia use the 2021 rule. A vote on this will be held at the State Spring Meeting.”

Sheri Zimmermann observed that the two Southeast Region tournament hosts in Virginia in 2023 are both in District 7 (Arlington for the 12s and Southwestern Youth Association for the 16-18s), and that she would solve this problem with those host teams so that State brackets could be posted in accordance with State Policy 1004. No vote was needed for 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Prepared by Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer