



BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

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



Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

MINUTES

March 15, 2015

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

In Attendance

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| Paul Link, State Commissioner | John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Opns. |
| Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer | Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm., Softball Opns. |
| Phil Larcomb, Asst. State Comm., T&C | Glenn Spangler, District 4 SB Comm. |
| Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner | John Kemper, District 9 Commissioner |
| Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner | Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief |
| Ken Bosserman, District 4 BB Commissioner | Larry Pritchett, District 5 BB Commissioner |
| Pat Kyger, President, Keezletown League (D4) | Josh Hale, Treasurer, Keezletown League (D4) |
| Jeremy Benfield, President, Sandston League (D3) | Bob Rhyne, District 7 BB Commissioner |
| Dennis Cobb, Asst. Comm., District 4 | |
| Bruce Frye, State Umpire Consultant, Softball, Central/South | |
| George Burke, State Umpire Consultant, Baseball, North & Baseball, Central/South (acting) | |

Paul Link called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Kern Bosserman 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 3/15/15, \$7,778.32 in the checking account, a \$1,000.00 bridge loan to Greater Fairfax Babe Ruth League to help them over an internal financial restructuring, 305.213 shares of Hartford Balanced Income Fund valued at \$4,178.37, 1,808.291 shares of Lord Abbett Multi-Asset Growth Fund valued at \$32,711.98, 55.672 shares of Oppenheimer Developing Markets Fund valued at \$1,994.17, 1,461.825 shares of Oppenheimer Rising Dividend Fund valued at \$29,704.28, 194.875 shares of Oppenheimer Global Opportunities Fund valued at \$8,063.93, and 298.567 shares of Goldman Sachs High Yield Fund valued at \$2,045.18. Total assets as of 3/14/15 = \$87,476.24. The Funds values are as of February 28, 2015. Last year at this time, total assets were \$77,182.36. Most of the increase is the result of a very profitable stock market year.

So far this year, seven leagues have paid their 2015 State dues, the same as last year.

Old Business

General Discussion. Paul Link reported that as he begins his third year as State Commissioner, he remains very impressed with the level and quality of effort of the State Board of Directors. One of his goals for this year is to systematize the process of policy decision making, including improving the flow of information through channels to everyone involved in or affected by the decisions being considered and made.

Review of New State Alignment. Paul Link went over the decision to break up the experimental District 13 into Districts 6 and 7, with some differences in the leagues assigned to the Districts compared to earlier times. Arlington, Springfield, and Greater Vienna are in the new District 6. Greater Fairfax, McLean-Great Falls, Northern Fairfax County (13-15s), Northern Fairfax County Senior (16-18s), and Brentsville at the Babe Ruth level, and Arlington, Herndon, Pioneer, and Brentsville at the Cal Ripken level are in the new District 7. Paul then introduced Bob Rhyne, new District 7 Commissioner.

Shared Boundaries. Paul Link pointed out that, although Babe Ruth does not allow waivers on geographical boundaries, it does allow shared boundaries and allows intricate descriptions of boundaries to include specific locations. Where two or more Districts are involved, the jurisdictions must agree. Within a District, the District Commissioner has the power to rule, but should seek approval of the affected leagues.

Reports from Southeast Region. At Southeast Region Tournaments, if an illegal bat is detected, the offending batter and the team manager will be ejected from that game.

Winners of State Tournaments will be required to check in with the Regional Tournament Host League online within 24 hours of winning the Tournament.

Powell Sports Equipment, Inc. is offering discounts on the UPM pitching machines (UPM Black Flame - \$199.99 and the UPM Triple Flame hand held unit - \$69.99). If a league buys one of the machines from Powell Sports, it can get the discounted price by ordering on-line at www.upm45sales.com. At checkout enter code SEVAB15 to receive the discount and free shipping. No sales taxes are charged on any orders. (The Black Flame will be required in the Southeast Region in 2016.)

Any league wishing to be considered to host a Regional Tournament in 2016 must submit an official request to the State Commissioner by May 15, 2015. Available tournaments as of March 15 were 9s, 11s70, 12s60, 12s70, 13s, 14s, 13-15s, and 16-18s.

E-Cigarette Policy. Paul Link reported that, since our discussion about this subject at our previous meeting, his reading has shown that the hazards from e-cigarettes are as bad as from tobacco-based products. A brief discussion showed that this view was generally shared by those present. It was VOTED that e-cigarettes be banned at all State Babe

Ruth activities in the same manner that tobacco-based products are. The vote was unanimous. The penalty for violations will be included in the MTIP for each tournament.

Buddy-Ball Plans for 2015. Don Gowen reported that he has seen interest in one and possibly two leagues to hold Buddy-Ball events (not to be viewed as tournaments). Donny Rose recalled how much his dad enjoyed these games and the obvious delight displayed by the participants and their families. Don Gowen will follow up. Dave Gushee observed that this event will carry Don Rose's name and that the budget has a line item in it for expenses.

T-Ball Invitational Tournaments. Glen Allen and Greater Manassas have expressed interest in hosting Invitational Tournaments, also carrying Don Rose's name. The budget has a line item for expenses for this event as well.

District Champion Plaques and Banners. The State has already ordered the banners. District Commissioners are responsible to order District Champion Plaques from headquarters.

Proposed Baseball State Tournament Rotation Schedule. This is the last year for the rotation schedule currently in use. John DeYoung presented a proposed one for the next 5 years. No suggestions for change were offered. The schedule was then accepted and will be posted on the State Web site.

16-18 YO Tournament Formats. Due to the uneven distribution of 16-18 leagues across the State, some Leagues have been getting byes into the State Tournament, given that they are the only league in the District. Other Districts have an intense competition to get into the State Tournament. How to deal with this has been the subject of discussion for several meetings. Paul Link proposed that we consider an area approach to getting into the State Tournament and put forth one suggested set of areas with two teams within each area competing to determine which one goes forward. There would be 10 areas, two teams per area, with the end result a 10-team State Tournament. It was pointed out that we don't yet know how many 16-18 leagues will be chartered, so the suggested format was left on the table. It was VOTED to use the area format, with the areas to be arranged to lead to a 10-team State Tournament (9 area champions plus the Host team), the actual decisions to be made in May when 16-18 league registrations will be complete. The vote was unanimous among those present.

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. Fundraising 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

New Regional Alignment. Paul Link reported that Alabama has been moved from the Southeast Region to the Southwest Region.

Status of League Charters. Forty four leagues (about two thirds of last year's leagues) have chartered and have been billed for State dues. A listing of all non-chartered leagues was distributed and is available to District Commissioners via a secure link on the State Web site.

New League Presidents. Phil Larcomb has offered to hold a training session for new league presidents, to help them through the learning process for chartering, roster preparation, and other administrative issues. Of the 44 leagues already chartered, only 7 have new presidents. After discussion, it was decided to cancel the new presidents training session and task the District Commissioners with the responsibility to provide this help as needed to the new officials. A listing of the leagues with new presidents was distributed.

Rule Changes for 2015. Headquarters has instituted a number of rule changes, followed by two supplemental communications to deal with comments and corrections from Virginia and the Southeast Region regarding errors in the first communication and the 2015 rule book. The whole set of changes is currently on the State Web site. Covered are: background checks, replacement of Designated Hitter (DH) with Extra Player (EP) for the 16-18 Year-olds Division, contact rule, catcher's mask, unacceptable bats, and shoes for softball players.

New Slash Bunt Rule. Babe Ruth has decided to eliminate "slash" (or "fake") bunting in the Cal Ripken Division. The definition of a "slash" (or "fake") bunt is where the batter squares in the batter's box as if to bunt and then pulls the bat back and makes a full swing in an attempt to hit the ball. The new rule is: ***Cal Ripken Division – Fake Bunt – Slash Bunt – A batter is out for illegal action when the player fakes a bunt and then takes a full swing, thus eliminating a player from fake bunting (slap-hitting) the ball. Penalty: Batter is out, the ball is dead, no runners may advance.*** The rule will be in the 2016 rule book but for 2015 is to be applied only during Cal Ripken Division tournaments.

The Board discussed this at some length. The rule was felt by all to be a good idea, but the Board was surprised that it will only apply to Cal Ripken Division tournament games. The Board VOTED to extend the rule to all Virginia Cal Ripken Division games throughout the 2015 season. The vote was unanimous.

Tournament Host Required Training. Phil Larcomb reported that last year's session was well received and that he got many recommendations that it be repeated annually, since so many Tournament Directors are new to the task. This year's will be held on Saturday June 6 in the Glen Allen area, specific location to be determined. The State will pay mileage to any Tournament Director or his designee who attends and submits a

Reimbursement Form to the State Commissioner.

Start Date for 2015 12 YO 70' State Tournament. The World Series for this level of play has been rescheduled to be played earlier than usual to accommodate its being televised nationally. The new World Series report date is July 23. The Regional Tournament report date will be July 8. This means that Virginia's State Tournament must be finished by July 6, which, because of the Fourth of July weekend, feeds back to a start date of June 26.

2015 State Tournament Host Leagues and Estimated Teams. The locations, start dates, and contact persons for each of the 11 State Baseball Tournaments and five State Softball Tournaments are available on the State Web site. It is too early to determine the numbers of teams that will participate.

Assignment of State Representatives to State Tournaments.

Baseball

Rookies	Varina	Curtis Moore
9s	Winchester	Phil Larcomb
10s	Greater Manassas	Dave Cogar
11s60	Deep Creek	Brandon Currence/Paul Link
11s70	Peachtree	Larry Pritchett
12s60	Deep Creek	Brandon Currence/Paul Link
12s70	Stuarts Draft	Glenn Spangler/Ken Bosserman
13s	Spotsylvania	Larry Pritchett/John DeYoung
14s	Shenandoah Valley	Ken Bosserman/Glenn Spangler
13-15s	South Hill	Tommy Clary
16-18s	Greater Loudoun	John Kemper

Softball

6U	not scheduled	
8U	Shenandoah Rec.	Don Gowen
10U	Shenandoah Rec.	Don Gowen
12U	Shenandoah Rec.	Don Gowen
14U	Shenandoah Rec.	Don Gowen
16U	Shenandoah Rec.	Don Gowen
18U	not scheduled	

Trophies, Plaques, and Patches. The Trophy Case has changed hands but will make the trophies and plaques. Ken Bosserman reported that the prices this year will be held even. The trophies will be ordered early with the goal to have them available for the tournament directors at the tournament training workshop.

2015 Southeast Regional Tournaments in Virginia. The Southeast Regional 10s Tournament will be held in Glen Allen. The 11s70 will be held in Stafford. The 16-18s will be held in Colonial Heights.

Waiver Process Review. Rob Connor has approved our request for blanket waivers for fewer than four teams per league and fewer than 12 players on a team – for any leagues that have properly chartered, paid their charter fees, met their insurance requirements, and completed their on-line rosters. A league needing such a waiver must go to the State Web site, print out Rob’s approval letter, and include the letter in its tournament team book. All other waiver needs are to be requested through the waiver process laid out on the State Web site.

Virginia Babe Ruth Umpires Association. The Association stands ready to help league officials identify umpires for both regular season play and tournament play. To help VBRUA to do this, Donny Rose asks the District Commissioners to find out from their leagues what umpire association(s) they use for umpires so that he, George Burke, and Bruce Frye can interact with them for mutual benefit.

Umpire Training. George Burke reported that four umpire training sessions have already been held, with six more scheduled. George indicated that some 114 umps have attended sessions so far, with a goal of more than 200 for the year. He is particularly interested in attracting younger umpires to the sessions.

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 Virginia Babe Ruth Umpires Association (VBRUA).

Virginia Umpires Association Fees. Fees for 2015 were determined at the 2014 State Fall meeting. The Parents Team Gate Pass table for 2015 State baseball and softball tournaments will be available to tournament hosts.

Scorebooks as Part of State Tournament Credentials for 12s70, 13-15s, and 16-18s. The Southeast Region no longer requires that the actual scorebooks accompany these teams to their Regional Tournaments. Likewise, the State will no longer require this.

Pitch Count Limits. Headquarters is carrying out a survey of coach and manager opinions on the pros and cons of instituting pitch count limits. In the discussion on this, there was general agreement that pitchers’ arms are vulnerable and that it is an important concern to keep in mind throughout the season. Opinions varied widely on whether a formal pitch count limit was a better way to deal with this than the current innings limit. Among those that thought that pitch count limits could be constructive, there was disagreement about the details of any regulation: How many pitches in a game, how much downtime between pitching outings, and how to phase increases in allowable pitches over time between games, for example. Presently the local leagues have the option on how they implement any pitch count policy.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer