



# Virginia

## Babe Ruth Baseball & Softball



### MINUTES March 17, 2019 Elks Lodge 389 Elk Drive Charlottesville, Virginia

#### In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner  
Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm., Info. Tech.  
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm.  
Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Commissioner  
Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner  
Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner  
Shana Kirby, District 5 Commissioner  
George Burke, State Umpire Consultant

John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Opns.  
Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer  
Glenn Spangler, District 4 Softball Comm.  
Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief  
Pat O'Brien, District 6 Asst. Commissioner  
Nancy Currence, District 1 Asst. Commissioner  
Sheri Zimmerman, District 7 Asst. Commissioner  
Leonard Lattiak, District 5 Umpire

Ken Bosserman offered the invocation, dedicating the day's business to the benefit of Virginia's Babe Ruth baseball and softball players.

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Paul Link asked for a Moment of Silence in memory of David Jay (former Virginia Assistant State Commissioner), John Lyons (former President of the Greater Herndon Babe Ruth League), Angie Paige (Board Member, Christiansburg Babe Ruth League), and Wilbur Snipes (former Eastern North Carolina State Commissioner).

By unanimous VOTE, the reading of the minutes of the State Fall Meeting was waived and the minutes approved.

Phil Larcomb reported that as of 16Mar19, the State treasury contained \$10,464.84 in the checking account (compared to \$1,835.15 at the end of 31Oct18). The investment account balance as of 22Feb19 was \$85,246.73 (compared to \$91,206.38 at the end of October 2018). 75% of the State's 73 leagues have chartered and have been billed for State dues. Fifty-five leagues have been invoiced and 34 have paid.

Phil Larcomb and John Armentrout have designed a new billing system that has allowed for a quicker turn around in generating invoices to the leagues. The invoices are based on the leagues' last-year roster counts as has been our State policy for the last 2 years. The new system can also

generate in real time revenue reports and balance reports for leagues that have not yet paid. This new process will eliminate many of the hours needed to reconcile the dues payments and prepare the yearend financial statement.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Paul Link, as he begins his seventh year as State Commissioner, opened his remarks by reviewing the responsibilities of the District Commissioner position. At the top of the list is promoting growth through both player registrations and new league development.

Paul referenced that Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner, had added over 1000 players to his District over the past few seasons. Marty Gordon, District 10 Commissioner, has added close to 500 players in this new District.

Paul gave a report comparing team numbers from his first year as State Commissioner through the 2018 season. Virginia has lost 198 Cal Ripken teams and 35 Babe Ruth teams, but has added 10 Softball teams over that span. Paul reported that 70% of this loss was at the T-ball and Rookie age groups, 22% at the Minors level, and only 6% at the Majors level. Paul then let the Commissioners know that the numbers did not support a travel ball issue for lost players but rather an issue getting new players to register for T-Ball and then keeping the T-Ball players as they move into the Rookie level.

In summary, Paul concluded that the loss represented only one player at each age group per league. He then challenged all District Commissioners to put pressure on their league presidents to get creative and find methods to register those new players.

Paul suggested the District Commissioners have their leagues add USA Quickball to help increase interest at the T-Ball ages. It was also suggested that mail-back registration cards be distributed to elementary and pre-schools and that each league implement a “bring a friend to practice” program to increase registrations at all age levels.

Paul then challenged the District Commissioners to reach out to former Babe Ruth leagues that left the Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia program and find out what can be done to get those leagues to return to Babe Ruth. Paul specifically cited Fauquier in District 9, Herndon-Reston Softball in District 7 and Orange County and Spotsylvania in District 5. Paul also asked District 7 to pursue possible additions to Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia in the Brambleton area.

## **Checking the State Website**

Paul mentioned the State website home page offers valuable information that all Commissioners should be aware of. In addition to late news, a navigation directory so that the user can find, for example, State Policies, State Meeting announcements, MTIPs, and State tournament information are all posted on the site. Paul mentioned that the State Spring Meeting notice and agenda had been posted on the State home page for over a month. Now that we are in season, Paul asked each Commissioner to check the website for updates at least twice a week.

## **District Meetings**

At the Fall Meeting, Paul requested that the District Commissioners inform him of their District meeting dates. Paul said he attended meetings for softball in Areas 1, 2, and 4, and for baseball in Districts 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 10.

## **Headquarters Meeting Review**

Paul gave feedback on his meeting at Babe Ruth headquarters in December. Paul presented 11 pages of email questions and concerns regarding the 2019 rule book changes. Comments were from Virginia District Commissioners, league presidents, and Assistant State Commissioners. Paul reported our concerns were met with a “deaf ear.” One National Commissioner questioned whether our league presidents “were qualified to run our leagues.” This generated some negative feedback from the attendees. National Headquarters response was “We had to something because we are losing teams to travel ball.” and “We would rather do something bad then do nothing at all.”

## **Rookie Invitational Tournament**

Paul reported that Glen Allen is hosting a Rookie Tournament for 7 year olds (June 28–30) and that this would replace the 7-Year-Olds Junior Rookie Invitational that they hosted in previous years.

*The website to register is: <https://www.glenallensports.com/virginia-7u-state-invitational>*

**New Kent is also hosting a machine pitch Invitational for 7 year olds (July 12–14).**

**New Kent is anticipating 16 teams as follows:**

1. New Kent
2. Western Branch
3. MARA
4. Gainesville-Haymarket
5. Williamsburg
6. Pioneer
7. Fluvanna
8. Rockville
9. Glen Allen
10. West Raleigh
11. East Rowan
12. Manassas
13. Stafford
14. Va Bombers (Rappahannock)
15. South Charlotte

16. Maymont Mudcats (Richmond LL)

### **Update on Background Checks and Abuse Training**

Paul mentioned the changing information being received on this topic. The Risk Management Document from Babe Ruth has been updated and now has new language about the training requirements for volunteers. Sports Engine seems not to be up to speed on these changes and is advising leagues as to Babe Ruth policy which they should not be doing. Their advice is in conflict with other information received. Paul referred all leagues to the Risk Management Document, Virginia State Policy 1023 (text below), page 6 of the Babe Ruth rule book, The Kid Safe FAQs posted on the Babe Ruth website, and the following guidance from Rob Connor, our National Commissioner.

“The rule is volunteers must have it completed. BRL only confirms volunteers who are on the roster of a team. We don’t collect umpires list, concession workers or general parents who are driving players. The local league can set criteria for those levels of volunteers.”

### **Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.**

**Policy Number: 1023 ~ Dated: 12/03/18**

### ***Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (S. 534 enacted February 14, 2018)***

All adult members (managers and coaches) of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. leagues in Virginia and West Virginia and all adults authorized by such members to interact with minor children shall adhere to the following:

1. Immediately (within 24 hours) report an allegation of child abuse of an amateur athlete who is a minor to a local law enforcement agency or local child protective services agency or the FBI.
2. Complete an approved Babe Ruth abuse prevention and awareness training course and maintain a certificate of completion on file.
3. Authorize a background check to be completed every 2 years.
4. Promote a safe environment in sports that is free from abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, of any minor.
5. Limit one-on-one interactions between a minor and an adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency situations.
6. Be aware that a violation of the above that results in a personal injury to a victim while a minor (and for a period not later 10 years after the victim reaches 18 years of age) may be liable for liquidated damages in the amount of \$150,000 and also be subjected to criminal prosecution.

### **Review of Specific Virginia Tournament Rules for 2019**

The group decided to use the 8-Year-Olds Machine Pitch Rules (used in the Cal Ripken Invitational World Series) as on pages 30 and 31 of the 2019 rule book for the Virginia Rookie State Tournament rules. The reason was that the World Series uses a slightly different set of rules than the Southeast Region. Using the 2019 rule book rules will cause less parent and coach confusion.

Rookie Pitch Count: four (4) pitches instead of five (5), (see page 30 in the 2019 rule book; World Series uses four (4) pitches)

Rookie Time Limit: 1.5 hours; to speed up play, it was suggested to place a bucket at the mound and at the plate.

Bat Rule Penalty: Batter is out (no ejections)

Games Played Requirement – State Policy 1022 (text below)

### **Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.**

**Policy Number: 1022 ~ Dated: 12/03/18**

#### ***Games Played Requirement***

To be eligible for tournament play in any Division of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc., a player must have played in at least one-half of his or her team's scheduled league games played prior to the start of tournament play. (When an odd number of games is involved, the player receives the benefit – e.g., for eligibility, one-half of 13 games played is 6 games. If a player is unable to meet this requirement because of injury or participation in scholastic sports, contact the District Commissioner to request approval from Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.)

### **Test Pilot Program for 16-Year-Old Players for 2019**

In 2016, a test pilot program was introduced to allow a 16-year-old player to play in the 13-15 Division but “will NOT be eligible for 2016 tournament competition.” This program was extended to 2017 and 2018 and has again been extended for 2019. John DeYoung said that a league needs to write to Robert Faherty ([Robert@baberuthleague.org](mailto:Robert@baberuthleague.org)) for permission to participate in the 16-year-old test pilot program.

Charlottesville and New Kent have been approved for 2019.

### **Perfect Pitch Arm Free Machine Update**

Pioneer will be using the new pitching machine at the Rookies State tournament. Paul asked the District Commissioners to confirm with their leagues that they have filled out the promotional card to request their machine.

Paul mentioned the following leagues need to request their machine ASAP. There is really no excuse for them having not mailed in their request yet. These cards were distributed to DCs on December 2. Please reach out to your league presidents who are on this list and have them mail in their request card immediately.

District 1: Deep Creek, Denbigh, Gloucester, New Kent

District 3: Glen Lea, Metro Richmond

District 4: Keezletown, Northeast Augusta, Shenandoah Valley, Stuarts Draft, Waynesboro

District 5: Fluvanna, Greene County, Madison, Northside, Rockville

District 7: Pioneer, Herndon

District 9: Rappahannock, Summit Point, Winchester

NOTE: Any softball leagues with 8U programs that use the machine to pitch may also request a free machine. The adapter to make the machine usable for softball will be available next week.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **New Leagues for 2019**

The following new leagues have already or are expected to charter this year:

Lynnhaven (District 1)

Smithfield 13-15 Year-olds (District 1)

Floyd County, 16 teams (District 10)

Fauquier Fast Pitch Softball (District 8)

### **Status of League Charters**

As of the Spring Meeting, 55 leagues have chartered and have been billed for State dues, compared to 39 last year. Thirty-four have paid, which is more than twice the number of leagues reported at last year's State Spring Meeting.

### **2019 Tournament Directors Workshop**

This year's workshop will be held on June 1 at the Belmont Recreation Center, 1600 Hilliard Road, Henrico, VA 23228 (Hermitage Room). Tournament Directors or their representatives must attend this workshop, as trophies, patches, and banners are distributed to the host leagues. The tournament UICs must also attend this workshop. Paul requested that the District Commissioners also attend this training.

### **Waiver Process Review**

A "blanket waiver request" for less than four teams in a league and less than 12 players on a team was requested by Paul Link on 16Mar19. [On 18Mar19, following this Spring Meeting, the request was approved by Rob Connor. The approved waiver is available for download from the State website.]

### **2019 State Tournament Host Leagues and Contract and Payment Status**

All host leagues except for 14U and 16U softball have been identified and their host contracts and invoices prepared. The information is posted on the State website.

## **Estimate of Teams from Each District in State Baseball Tournaments**

John DeYoung reported that only District 7 has provided the team numbers for this year's State tournaments.

### **Assignment of State Tournament Representatives: Paul Link**

Baseball:

Rookies: George Burke

9s: Ken Bosserman

10s: Curtis Moore

11s70: John Kemper

12s60: Curtis Moore

12s70: Dave Cogar

13s: Brandon Currence

14s: Sheri Zimmerman, John DeYoung, and Bob Rhyne

13-15s: Myron Struck and Pat O'Brien

16-18s: Tommy Clary

Softball:

8U, 10U, 12U: Dave Cogar

14U, 16U: Curtis Moore and Don Gowen

### **T-Ball Tournament Plans for 2019**

T-Ball invitational tournaments are under consideration in Manassas, weekend of 21 or 28 June, and New Kent, 12–14 July. Plans are being developed.

### **Medals, Pins, Plaques, and Patches**

The 16-18 baseball and 16U softball State Champions will be awarded rings again in 2019 instead of plaques; in addition, all State Champions going to Regional tournaments will be awarded T-shirts with logos, and all baseball and softball State Champions (gold) and Runners-

up (silver) will be give medallions and souvenir pins. This change was made in 2018 in response to increasing comments that trophies and plaques were becoming passé.

### **2019 Southeast Region Baseball Tournaments in Virginia**

Stafford will host the 9s, 12s60, and 14s Regional tournaments. Williamsburg will host the 13s Regional tournament.

### **2019 Softball Tournament Trail**

Stafford Regional Qualifier: June 19

NC Regional Qualifier: July 5

2019 State Softball Tournaments:

8U, 10U, 12U in Manassas starting July 5

14U, 16U (location tbd) starting on June 28

### **Virginia Babe Ruth Umpires Association (VBRUA)**

The Association stands ready to help league officials identify umpires for both regular season play and tournament play. To help VBRUA 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**

Donny Rose reported that three baseball umpire training sessions and one softball training session have already been held. Five more are scheduled. About 100 umpires have participated so far. Forty-seven junior umpires have been trained.

### **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.

### **VBRUA Fees**

Fees for 2019 are unchanged and are posted on the State website.



## **Parent Gate Pass Fee Schedule for 2019**

John DeYoung summarized the Parents Gate Pass Program Fee (PGPPF) table for 2019 State baseball tournaments (played in the default double-elimination format). 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.

## **Review of 2019 Tournament Team Checklist**

John DeYoung reported that four items were removed from the Regional checklist. The birth documents are no longer required in the 2019 rule book. The Virginia State checklist will still require approved waivers and School Attendance Forms, four copies of the Player Announcement Form, and a check for the Parent Team Gate Pass Program fee.

## **Games Played Chart**

The league presidents certify the games played requirement (State Policy #1022). The Games Played Chart is still available in the Documents Download Center on the State website, but is no longer required as a Tournament Team Book Checklist item. The District Commissioners may or may not use the Games Played Chart when checking tournament credentials.

## **Washington Nationals Champions Day**

This year, the celebration of 12-year-olds State Champions in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia is tentatively scheduled to be held on Sunday, September 15. The State will not be paying for any additional parents' and siblings' tickets to attend this event (as was approved at the State Fall Meeting).

## **Babe Ruth College Scholarship Program**

This program provides financial assistance to former Cal Ripken Baseball, Babe Ruth Baseball, and Babe Ruth Softball players looking to further their education beyond high school. The former player must file his or her own application. Details are available on the State website in the Documents Download Center.

## **Virginia Babe Ruth Grant Program**

This program is designed to award financial grants to chartered Babe Ruth Leagues within Virginia's defined boundaries to improve playing facilities and equipment for the benefit of Virginia Babe Ruth baseball and softball players.

Grants are awarded annually and range from \$500 to \$1500. Applications must be submitted to the State Commissioner by September 1. The awards will be announced in December and payments will be sent before the end of the year. The individual applications will be reviewed by the State Executive Committee, who will evaluate the applications. The number of grants

approved each year will depend primarily on the earnings from the State's reserves.

Each applicant must submit an official grant application form (available in the Documents Download Center on the State website) and have it approved by the appropriate District Commissioner. Each project submitted must have a separate application form (which has been revised for 2019).

### **General Discussion**

Next meeting: Tentative date is September 22, 2019, at Staunton, VA

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Prepared by Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer