



Virginia

Babe Ruth Baseball & Softball



MINUTES
April 3, 2022
Ramsey Center
2062 Magnolia Avenue
Buena Vista, Virginia

In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner	Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Commissioner
Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer	Matt Clark, District 5 Commissioner
John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Ops	Billie Clark, District 5 Asst. Commissioner
Glenn Spangler, Asst. State Comm., Training	Pat O'Brien, District 6 Commissioner
Donny Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief	Sheri Zimmerman, District 7 Commissioner
George Burke, State Umpire Advisor	Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner
Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner	Chris Frazier, District 10 Baseball Commissioner
Brian Eamigh, District 1 Asst. Commissioner	Marty Gordon, District 10 Softball Commissioner
Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner	Doug Bates, District 11 Commissioner
Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Commissioner	Darrell Plogger, V.P., RARO Cal Ripken
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Commissioner	D.J. Stewart, President, Shenandoah Valley BR

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

Invocation: Tommy Clary offered the invocation, 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 those Babe Ruth volunteers who passed away in the last year: Henry Sermons (Southeast Region), Mike Berry (Metro Junior Babe Ruth League VP), Tommy Bowen (Varina softball coach), and Marcus Clark (Peachtree softball assistant coach).

A motion was approved to make a \$500 memorial contribution to the Babe Ruth Alumni Association in memory of these four Babe Ruth volunteers.

Introduction of guests and new officials: Brian Eamigh, District 1 Assistant Commissioner (President, Gloucester Babe Ruth League), D.J. Stewart, President, Shenandoah Valley Babe Ruth League, and Darrell Plogger, Vice President, Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization (RARO) Cal Ripken League, were introduced.

Roll call: Paul Link had the District Commissioners introduce themselves and give a brief description of the geographical locations that they represent in the State.

Reading of minutes from the State Fall Meeting: By unanimous vote, the reading of the minutes of the 2021 State Fall Meeting was waived.

Treasurer's report: Phil Larcomb reported that the State treasury contained, as of April 1, 2022, \$7,080.02 in the checking account and \$70,933.35 in the mutual funds account for total cash and reserves of \$78,013.37. The accounts receivable balance was \$12,870 (State dues outstanding \$2,990, State contracts \$4,880, and loan \$5,000). There were no liabilities. 71 of the 72 leagues that chartered have been billed. All baseball and softball State contracts have been billed to date. 45 of the 71 leagues billed have paid. All outstanding State dues are due by May 1, 2022.

OLD BUSINESS

Opening remarks: Paul Link thanked the District Commissioners and the leagues in persevering through the pandemic and not giving up. Paul mentioned that our slogan for 2022 must be DO IT NOW! If the leagues and District Commissioners wait, it will be too late. Paul instructed the District Commissioners that it will be their responsibility this year to train Tournament Directors for this year's State tournaments and distribute all of awards for the State tournaments that their Districts will be hosting. Paul mentioned that the key takeaway was to train NOW and not wait until June.

Paul offered the District Commissioners the following tips for a successful 2022 season:

- Make sure that all of your leagues are chartered. Paul mentioned that only one league still had to get their charter application submitted to Babe Ruth Headquarters.
- Verify that each league has paid their charter and Insurance fees. A league who has not paid for their insurance cannot hold their tryouts.
- Reach out and ask each league President if they received their new league kits, rule books, and score books for each team. Have they given them to their managers and coaches? Or are they sitting in a press box or in the trunk of their car? Paul has seen them in both places (and not at the start of the season but unfortunately at the end of the season).
- Check to see if leagues are entering their online rosters before their first regular season game. Ten leagues already have rosters online.
- Ask league presidents if they are aware of the Every Kid Sports Pass where they can receive up to \$150 four times per year per child. They can apply using their smartphone at www.everykidsports.org.
- League presidents should be making sure that their umpires are NUA and VBRUA certified. They should know the fees are \$65 for one sport and \$85 for both baseball and softball, which includes insurance coverage. Junior Umpire fees are \$35 and \$55, respectively. NUA has a new logo this year, but patches are still available.
- Ask leagues to verify that background checks (and abuse training) are current for all of their volunteers and that their certificates are in hand. Leagues should not be searching for certificates when putting together tournament credentials. This is another "fire drill" that we can prevent by doing it NOW.
- Ask league presidents if their tournament travel teams are planning on registering for any of the invitational World Series. If they are, they should be contacting Daniela Bottoni at Babe Ruth Headquarters because registration is now open.

- Inform league presidents to contact Rob Coffman at Babe Ruth Authentics if they are using Authentics as their uniform provider. Rob can be reached at Authentics@baberuthleague.org or 817-917-4065. The softball uniform supplier is Decker Sports.
- Navigate with league presidents around the new Babe Ruth Headquarters website to become familiar with all of the resources available.
- Inform league presidents that a new local league promotional toolkit is available for the asking.
- As players take the field this spring and begin practice, be sure that all coaches are aware that sports concussions happen and how best to react. The handouts for this meeting include a brief one-pager to help get this message out. It is a simple four-step approach: (1) respond to injuries immediately, (2) know the signs, (3) move gently following an initial 24 to 48 hours of rest, and (4) seek help if symptoms linger.
- Remind everyone to take the time to log on to the monthly “In the Dugout” webinars; all of these items except the concussion training handout were covered in these webinars.

World Series Invitations: Virginia should receive invitations to tournament trail World Series this year as follows: Arlington 10s.

NOTE: All Invitational World Series application portals are now open. Simply contact Daniela Bottoni at Headquarters. Glen Allen as the Regional 10s winner last year can now register.

World Series in Virginia in 2022: 13s are in Glen Allen and the 13-15s are in Stafford. Reminder: This means that the Virginia State Champ 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, as approved, the Virginia State Champion and Runner-up at each age group (both baseball and softball) advance to the Regional tournaments.

Background check review – NCSI (National Center for Safety Initiatives):

Leagues must use NCSI through SportsSignUp Play. However, if their parent organization or Rec Department also requires background checks and they use NCSI, a waiver can be obtained by contacting Rob Connor at Headquarters. Other providers may be accepted but Rob has to grant the waiver to use these other service providers. No exceptions.

Grants awarded for 2021: There were four grants from the Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. Grant Program awarded in 2021:

Northeast Augusta c/o Cassell Athletics division: Received \$1200 for backstop padding.

Charlottesville Babe Ruth: Received \$1500 for field improvements (infield and outfield regrading and base path expansion).

Herndon-Reston Cal Ripken: Received \$500 for T-Ball equipment purchase plus a \$1000 contingency grant for T-Ball equipment purchase based on registration increases 2022 over 2021.

Northside Babe Ruth: Received \$1300 for equipment purchases to start their new softball program.

State website: A reminder to check the Virginia website on a regular basis going forward as we approach the season for notices and updated information. Today, a new home page is being launched with a look that mirrors the Southeast Region website. Everyone should review the “Documents Center” and be aware of the materials listed. Be sure that league presidents are aware. It will save Paul Link a lot of phone calls and emails. They should also review the online waiver process. This is another area where Paul gets a lot of direct contact from leagues. John DeYoung added that the new website had updated maps showing the State Districts for baseball and softball with a list of leagues in each District.

NEW BUSINESS

“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.

GoDog Sports (streaming video): Sam Walker of GoDog Sports was invited to present at this meeting but had a conflict and could not attend. Paul Link keeps getting emails from him as if he is a decisionmaker for the leagues on this product. Paul thought it would be good for Sam to have access to each of the District Commissioners to get their leagues’ contact information. Streaming video is a product that is gaining traction in all aspects of business. Many leagues are now using and making money from it as a fundraiser. Maybe a prerequisite question for future grants is “have you installed streaming video” at your field(s) or made contact with “pushsave” for fundraising administration?

“State of Baseball” meetings (“NoVA Baseball Alliance”): This is an alliance formed among youth league (Babe Ruth and Little League) leaders, high school coaches, American Legion league leaders, travel league leaders, and academy owners to address some alarming trends being witnessed at all levels of baseball organization. Specifically, the proliferation of “showcase” teams that is negatively affecting the number of players playing more competitive travel and high school baseball. There is also a focus on declining youth league registrations at the hands of soccer and basketball where games are an hour in and out the door. Recruitment, game length, player and coach training, umpire shortages, and national conversations concerning lighter baseballs for 9 and younger, bat sizes, and consistent birth dates for Little League, Babe Ruth, PONY, Dixie, and travel are all on the table for discussion at future meetings. The goal is to collaborate and network, share ideas, and use our resources to help all. Rob Hahne, Chairman of the Fairfax County Baseball Council, is leading this effort. John DeYoung, Sheri

Zimmerman, and a representative from our Herndon-Reston Cal Ripken League attended the initial meeting on October 26 and John, Sheri, Pat O'Brien, and Paul Link attended the much larger second meeting on February 11 along with members from Pioneer Babe Ruth Baseball, Herndon-Reston Cal Ripken, Greater Vienna Babe Ruth, Alexandria Senior Babe Ruth, and Springfield Babe Ruth. John reported how one league started a "Friday Night Lights" event where a T-Ball, Rookie baseball, or softball game would be played on the league's Major60 or Major70 field before a Major60 or Major70 game so that the younger players (and their parents and fans) would experience the lights, public address announcements, and refreshment stands that they could look forward to in their future seasons. Paul suggested that this be mentioned again in the open discussion at the end of this meeting.

Metro Junior Baseball League: This is a Richmond inner-city league which has previously played in District 3 Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth and is now combining players from Richmond, New Orleans, Dallas, and Cleveland to play in the Babe Ruth Caribbean International Championship as Team Metro USA. Babe Ruth Headquarters is supporting this effort to build their Caribbean presence.

25-year volunteer pins: Paul Link presented pins and letters of commendation to:

Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner,
Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner,
Gayle Clary, District 2 Assistant Commissioner,
Larry McBride, Treasurer, Arlington Senior Babe Ruth League,
Larry Crowder, volunteer, Greater Manassas Baseball League, and
David Peters, President, Lunenburg Babe Ruth League, and

John DeYoung presented a pin and letter of commendation to:

Paul Link, Virginia State Commissioner.

Virginia State Commissioner Awards: Brandon Currence, Marty Gordon, and Chris Frazier were presented with the first-ever Virginia State Commissioner Awards for outstanding advancement of Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth baseball and softball in the State. Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner, has added four leagues totaling 113 teams and over 1350 players to District 1. Marty Gordon, District 10 Softball Commissioner, was instrumental in convincing seven Dixie Youth leagues in the New River Valley to join Babe Ruth Softball. This started as an experiment and has now developed into the addition of an entire new District (10) in Virginia. Chris Frazier, District 10 Baseball Commissioner, has worked with all seven of the softball leagues to add Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth Baseball to their Recreation Departments' youth sports offerings. Together, Marty and Chris have added 44 teams and over 528 players to the State rosters.

2022 rule changes: John DeYoung reviewed the handout of 2022 rule changes including changes in tournament pitching rest requirements, host teams at all levels of tournament play at the District level (at the discretion of the team's league president), elimination of the Host Family Plan for the 16-18s World Series, extending the cap emblem option to the World Series, process for establishing State fees, and requirements related to the color

of a softball pitcher's glove. He also explained the handout listing rule change requests that were not approved or not considered.

John asked if District Commissioners had received their 2022 baseball and softball rule books yet. Most had not.

Paul Link clarified the Southeast Region's interpretation of the change in Rule 11.06, paragraph 7 (page 29 of the 2022 baseball rule book): If a Regional host team wants to play down prior to hosting, they **must** start at the District level of play. The only exception to this would be if their District is not having a tournament in that age group. They would then be allowed to start at the State level. If the Regional or World Series host does not want to begin play at the District level, then they would not be eligible to play before the tournament that they are hosting.

New Rookie rules for 2022: John DeYoung reported that the Virginia State Rookie baseball rules and 8U softball rules have been replaced with "Cal Ripken Rookie Baseball Playing Rules for the Southeast Regional Tournament" and "Babe Ruth 8U Softball Playing Rules for the Southeast Regional Tournament" (both revised "10/26/2021"). The new rules can be downloaded from the "Documents Center" of the State website; they are listed (alphabetically) as "Rules - SER (and VBR) 8U Softball Rules" and "Rules - SER (and VBR) 8YO Rookie Baseball Rules."

Pilot uniform program for Cal Ripken Division: Coaches were to be allowed to wear shorts purchased from Babe Ruth Authentics. More information on this program, along with pictures of the uniforms, was promised. However, nothing is yet in hand. Paul heard last Saturday that this Pilot Program might be postponed. Then he heard on Tuesday that the program has officially been scrapped for this season. District Commissioners should tell their League presidents to look for a survey on this topic. The results will be presented to the Babe Ruth League Board of Directors at next year's annual meeting.

Changes to softball tournament rules summary: Paul Link reported that Virginia will begin enforcing softball Rule 11.05, paragraph 15, regarding time limits for all age groups in tournament play. No new inning may start after 1.5 hours of play. In double elimination bracket play, if the time limit results in a tie score, additional innings will be played until a winner is determined.

All references to 8U have been deleted from the Softball State Tournament Rules Summary because they are covered in the Babe Ruth 8U Softball Playing Rules for the Southeast Regional Tournament.

2022 State baseball tournament host rotation chart and proposed changes: John DeYoung explained that the current State baseball tournament host rotation table covers the 2016 through 2022 tournament seasons. Paul Link presented an alternative to creating a new table for 2023 and following years: the 11 Districts would be randomly assigned to a selection order for 2023 and would move up one position every year. If a District elects not to make a selection, the selection would pass to the next District in that year's

selection order until all tournaments were assigned. After a brief discussion, the District Commissioners explained that the current practice for the State baseball tournament host rotation table offered several advantages in planning District tournaments and it was decided to keep that format.

Tournament contract and host fee payment update: John DeYoung and Phil Larcomb reported that host fee payments and signed contracts were due today and that 6 of the 11 State host leagues had met the deadline. Followup with most of the remaining leagues was expected within the week. [As of April 11, 2022, following this Spring Meeting, 10 host fee payments and 9 signed contracts had been received.]

2022 State tournaments host leagues and estimated teams:

Baseball: John DeYoung reported that the locations, start dates, and State Representatives for each of the 10 2022 State baseball tournaments and 5 State softball tournaments are posted on the State website. It is too early to determine the numbers of teams that will participate. State Policy 1003 requires that “Districts must report to the Assistant State Commissioner, Baseball Operations, or the Assistant State Commissioner, Softball Operations, as appropriate, the number of teams that will participate in each State tournament not later than May 15.” Brackets and amounts of the Parents Gate Pass Program Fee for each tournament cannot be determined until after all information is received.

Softball: Paul Link reported that District softball tournaments will be optional with the State having an open tournament for each age group at Wise and that the deadline to declare is June 10.

16-18 Area tournaments and State tournament: Paul Link reported the Area tournaments will be played June 30 to July 3. Deadline to declare for the 16-18 Area tournaments is June 20. The State tournament will start on July 7. The Area tournaments are open to all leagues eligible to enter teams. The winners of the Area tournaments will advance to the State tournament.

Assignment of State tournament representatives: Paul Link reported that the assignments had been made and were listed online.

2022 Regional and World Series tournament locations and reporting dates: John DeYoung reviewed the March 16, 2022, version of the handout “2022_ser_tournament_dates” which is posted on the Southeast Region home page (as the “2022 SE Regional Tournaments Worksheet”) and reported that all 2022 State, Regional, and World Series tournament locations and dates are listed in that handout and are also posted on the “Tournament Brackets & Archive” page of the State website.

2022 Regional softball tournaments: Paul Link reported the regional softball tournaments will be held at the following locations:

Southwest Athletics (8U, 12U, & 16U): Clemmons, NC (Winston-Salem)
Davidson County (10U & 14U): High Point, NC (Thomasville)

Status of league charters: Paul Link reported that only Radford (District 10) had not chartered to date and would charter on Thursday; all other Districts had 100% of their leagues chartered.

2022 rosters: Paul Link asked for the District Commissioners to DO IT NOW. Paul asked District Commissioners to remind the leagues to get the rosters done early and to check the accuracy of data (home addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of players and coaches) on the rosters. There are 10 leagues with rosters already online (Bath County, Churchville Softball, Gloucester, McLean-Great Falls, Montgomery County, Northeast Augusta, Varina, Vienna, Waynesboro, and West Augusta).

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 schedule for 2022: No report was presented.

New leagues for 2022: Paul Link reported the following new leagues:

Craddock (Portsmouth) (BR & CR) – D1
Brunswick (BR) – D2
South of the James Ball Club (16-18) – D3 (will be absorbing players from Central Chesterfield)
[On April 11, 2022, following this Spring Meeting, Greater Fauquier (13-15) – D9 became a new chartered league.]

2022 State tournament host training: Glenn Spangler trained the District Commissioners on the 2022 State Tournament Directors Training. Each District Commissioner will be required to schedule a meeting with their host league(s) President(s) and tournament directors(s) and train the Tournament Directors and distribute trophies, patches, and banners to the State host leagues.

Umpire training: George Burke reported that five baseball umpire training sessions and one softball training session have already been held. George and Donny Rose both reported successful umpire training in District 10 and District 11.

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 compensation schedule for 2022: The umpire rate chart is only for the State

tournaments. District Commissioners are not required to use the same structure for District tournaments.

Communicating with Junior Umpires: Paul Link cited the Safe Sport Act when communicating with Junior Umpires. Adults are not allowed to have a one-on-one conversation with a Junior Umpire. Make sure that any email or text to a Junior Umpire includes a “cc” to an adult (the parents, the league president, or the State or League Umpire-in-Chief).

Parent Gate Pass Fee schedule for 2022 (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 2022 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.

Tournament Team Checklist (“Revised 10-28-2021”): John DeYoung reported that the Virginia State Tournament Team Checklist has been replaced with the Southeast Region checklist (“Revised October 28, 2021”). That form has been updated to include four copies of the Player Announcement Form. Copies of approved waivers and School Attendance Forms (which were on the old Virginia State Tournament Team Checklist) are not on the new form, which can be downloaded from the “Documents Center” of the State website; it is listed (alphabetically) as “Checklist - Tournament Team.”

Washington Nationals Champions Day: Paul Link reported that Champions Day is projected for Sunday, September 18, 2022, when the Nationals will host the Miami Marlins at 1:35 p.m. The State Champions in 12-Year-olds Major60 Baseball, 12-Year-olds Major70 Baseball, and 12U Softball will be invited to this event.

Nationals Youth Baseball & Softball Day: Paul Link reported that Saturday, April 24, 2022, will be Nationals Youth Baseball & Softball Day at Nats Park. The Nationals will host the San Francisco Giants at 1:35 p.m. A special event ticket is required. For more information, go to www.nationals.com.

Scholarships: Paul Link reported that an Alumni Association scholarship was awarded to Christopher Jacob (Brentsville BRL). All qualified 16-18 players should apply for this

scholarship and eligible softball players for the Jaime Horn Softball Scholarship. The application forms can be downloaded from the “Documents Center” of the State website; they are listed (alphabetically) as “Babe Ruth College Scholarship Form (11-27-2018)” and “Jaime Horn Softball Scholarship Form (11-27-2018).”

Open Discussion:

Friday Night Lights – District Commissioners were asked to reach out their leagues and recommend to the league presidents offer T-Ball or softball teams the opportunity to play under the lights. It could be any day of the week.

Marty Gordon had a concern regarding the level of play in softball. A suggestion was to have two levels of softball tournaments (for example, the Alliance model used in 13-15 baseball). Work will begin on this suggestion.

Distribution of trophies and patches: Paul Link, Glenn Spangler, and Ken Bosserman distributed pins, official Babe Ruth line-up cards, individual awards (medallions, rings, and MVP trophies), and team banners and plaques to State representatives for the 2022 State baseball and softball tournaments.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Prepared by Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer