



Virginia Babe Ruth Baseball & Softball



MINUTES

April 5, 2020

State Spring Meeting (teleconference)

Participants

Paul Link, State Commissioner	John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Opns.
Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm., Softball Opns.	Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer
Glenn Spangler, Asst. State Comm., Training	John Armentrout, Asst. SE Regional Commissioner
Brandon Currence, District 1 Baseball Commissioner	Tommy Clary, District 2 Baseball Commissioner
Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner	Topper Phelps, District 3 Asst. Commissioner
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Commissioner	Matt Clark, District 5 Baseball Commissioner
Pat O'Brien, District 6 Asst. Baseball Commissioner	Sheri Zimmerman, District 7 Baseball Commissioner
Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner	John Kemper, District 9 Baseball Commissioner
Lisa Kemper, District 9 Asst. Baseball Commissioner	Marty Gordon, District 10 Softball Commissioner
Chris Frazier, District 10 Baseball Commissioner	Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief
George Burke, State Baseball Umpire Consultant	Bruce Frye, State Softball Umpire Consultant

League Presidents

Dennis Cobb, Augusta	Paul Coates, Rockville Softball
Scott Mistr, New Kent Baseball	Kevin Jones, Arlington Senior BR
Michelle Gregory, West Augusta	Cheryl Madison, Peachtree
Sean Connor, Glen Allen	Brian Eamigh, Gloucester
Chuck Muncy, Christiansburg	Nicole Deyo, Glen Lea (board member)
James Love, Sandston	

[In order to comply with CDC Interim Guidance for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the annual Spring Meeting of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. was held as a conference call.]

Tommy Clary offered the invocation, dedicating the day's business to the health and speedy recovery of baseball- and softball-playing kids and Babe Ruth volunteers during the COVID-19 crisis.

Paul Link called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

Paul Link opened the meeting with the following statement.

Today we are facing the most challenging situation since I have been involved with Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia. We have successfully managed crisis situations in the past (9/11, 2001, and the Beltway Sniper who left a trail of bodies from Falls Church to Ashland in October 2002) that closed some of our leagues' fields. But the challenge of COVID-19 is different. First, it is affecting our spring season and, second, more than likely, our tournament trail.

I would like for everyone to have a clear and common understanding of our role as the State BOD as we manage this crisis. It is our role to support the decisions of our local leagues from both a decision-making standpoint and a financial standpoint. It is not our role to make local league decisions. The decision to play this season is up to the local league Boards of Directors and not the State or District Commissioners.

Babe Ruth Headquarters has set a timeframe from May 1 to May 15 to make their decisions on the 2020 spring season and tournament trail. Until we know all the facts and hear those decisions, we will continue to take a wait-and-see approach. Additionally, the Commonwealth of Virginia has issued a “stay-at-home order” through June 10 and an indefinite restriction on gatherings of more than 10 people. Both of these orders restrict our ability to hold a spring season; in addition, we do not know and may not know for some time if or when the stay-at-home order might be lifted or extended. I know that you and the leagues in your Districts are looking for answers, but we simply must take a wait-and-see approach until we have all the information that we need.

We also need to be prepared if Headquarters wants the Regional and World Series tournaments to be played. Leagues in Virginia (Glen Allen, New Kent, and Stafford) are the hosts for four Regional tournaments and one World Series. How do we send a State champion representative if we do not play a regular season or a State tournament? Or do we not participate? What impact will lack of participation by Virginia, other States in the Southeast Region, or other Babe Ruth League Regions have on our host leagues?

Last year was one of our best years ever and it is a shame to lose that momentum. Don't give up hope. We should hope for the best, but plan for the worst. We must be prepared for the fact that we may not be able to play a regular season or have a tournament trail. Either way, it will cause us to put more focus on both summer and fall leagues.

Reading of minutes from the Fall Meeting

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

Treasurer's report

Phil Larcomb reported that the State treasury contained, as of March 31, 2020, \$5,014.74 in the checking account and \$79,100.00 in the mutual fund account; there were \$2,000 in liabilities for total Cash and Reserves of \$82, 111.74.

Old Business

2020 Grant applications

Pioneer was the only league that applied for a grant for Quickball in 2019. Paul reminded all the District Commissioners that the deadline is September 1 each year. The only grant request received for 2020 is from Summit Point.

State Policy (#1012) revision

John DeYoung reported that based upon the unanimous vote at the 2019 Fall Meeting on the

number of umpires for tournament games, State Policy 1012 is changed from:

Policy Number: 1012 ~ Dated: 09/20/09 [Revised: 03/09/14]

Number of Umpires Used in State Tournaments

Three (3) umpires will be used for all State tournament games played as follows: Major 70 11- and 12-Year-olds, 13-Year-olds, 14-Year-olds, 13-15 Year-olds, and 16-18 Year-olds baseball.

Two umpires will be used for all other State tournament games (including all softball).

In the event that this requirement would delay the completion of a tournament, the State-appointed Tournament Coordinator (the "State Representative") may suspend this policy.

to:

Policy Number: 1012 ~ Dated: 09/20/09 [Revised: 03/09/14, 09/22/19]

Number of Umpires Used in State Tournaments

Two (2) umpires will be used for all State baseball and softball tournament games.

In the event that this requirement would delay the completion of a tournament, the State-appointed Tournament Coordinator (the "State Representative") may suspend this policy.

Paul Link went over the current state of Virginia owing to the COVID-19 conditions and the mandatory stay-at-home orders in effect for Virginia and West Virginia until June 10, 2020. Paul said that the State will defer its decision on tournaments based on Headquarters guidance expected in May 2020. For right now, the State is in a wait-and-see holding pattern.

2020 State Dues Refunds

Paul Link said that all State dues for the 2020 season will be refunded to the leagues. Paul asked each District Commissioner to reach out to their respective leagues and find out how the leagues would like to receive their refund. For next billing season, the leagues will receive the exact same State dues invoice that was generated in 2020.

Two refund options were discussed:

Option #1: Phil Larcomb would write a check to each league that paid their 2020 State dues. The District Commissioners would verify the correct League President or Treasurer mailing addresses. The leagues would respond to the State Commissioner, Secretary-Treasurer, and Asst. State Commissioner for Baseball in writing on how the leagues would like payment.

Option #2: A credit will be issued to the league for next year's invoice in 2021. The league would not have to pay anything next year. The leagues would respond to the State

Commissioner, Secretary-Treasurer, and Asst. State Commissioner for Baseball in writing on how the leagues would like a credit to be carried forward in 2021.

The deadline is June 1 for the District Commissioners to let the State Secretary-Treasurer know how each league would like to receive this year's State dues refund.

New Business

2020 Outlook

Paul reviewed the following five items:

1. Virginia attained 100% online roster submissions for the 2019 season. Our challenge for 2020 will be to get them online earlier in the season and to focus on tournament rosters.
2. We need to continue to promote new leagues in both baseball and softball.
3. We need to promote Quickball and encourage leagues to participate.
4. We still need improvement opening emails and replying faster.
5. With the Spring season issues we need new ideas to make Fall ball more fun. Paul suggested considering Quickball for the older age groups citing the success the program had at James Madison University when it was introduced to the students.

Southeast Regional Fall 2019 meeting review

Paul reviewed his notes from the Softball Commissioners meeting and announced that the Assistant Regional Commissioner for Softball, Hal Brady, had resigned his position. Hal has moved to Georgia and is focused on building Babe Ruth leagues in Georgia. Paul also reviewed Steven Tellefsen's remarks concerning both travel and community baseball. Jessica Cusimano has been appointed as the new National Softball Commissioner. Paul referenced her experience with both video presentations and Facebook and suggested that any league that needs assistance in this area should reach out to Jessica (jessica@baberuthleague.org).

Southeast Region 2019 Hall of Fame inductee

Paul Link reported that Jim Guzdowski, a Virginia umpire from Manassas, was a 2019 inductee into the Southeast Region Hall of Fame.

Background checks and abuse training

Paul Link reported that based on 2019 final numbers several leagues had coaches that did not complete their required background checks. This practice puts the league at risk and liable for potential lawsuits.

Headquarters conference call and webinar – January 14, 2020

[Note: A recap of this conference call was sent to all State Board members on January 14, 2020.]

It was announced that Chartering and Insurance Registration is now open and that the rates have not increased from last year.

Effective this season, all tournament team coaches must include both their Coaching Certification Certificate and their Abuse Training Certificate in their team's credentials book.

Additionally, there is no longer a requirement for a league to have 4 teams to have a prep league for either 13-year-olds or 16-year-olds.

Cell phones and iPads are now allowed in the dugout for scorekeeping purposes only and are not to be used for any method of communication.

The 2020 Invitational World Series winners at the 9s and 11s will now both automatically qualify for the 10s and 12s70 World Series in 2021.

The Regional Winners also get the same World Series bids.

Musco Lighting offers four \$50K grants to leagues to refurbish previously installed Musco lights or to install lights on a new field. Deadline to apply is November 30, 2020.

Varsity Scoreboards is also developing a grant program providing assistance for leagues to purchase scoreboards. The details are presently being formulated but are not yet ready for release.

BSN Sports has Rawlings Babe Ruth logo baseballs in stock and ready to ship. They are also offering leagues a 10% discount by using Offer Code BRUTH on purchases of \$1000 or more.

BSN is also offering a "sample pack" including a jersey and cap. Contact BSN Sports for more information. The web link given in the presentation of January 14, 2020, did not work.

In the Q&A session, it was announced that the background checks are only good for 2 years so if you did one in 2018 you will need another check done for the 2020 season. It was also announced that the Abuse Training is good indefinitely at this point and does not need to be renewed. This may change in the future if a refresher course is developed but for now, once taken, nothing needs to be renewed just like the coaching certifications.

New leagues for 2020 (not discussed)

Status of league charters (not discussed)

Status of State dues payments and 2019 reconciliation (not discussed)

New State policy (Policy #1025)

John DeYoung reported that the current dues billing process was approved in 2016. This process will be formalized as State Policy 1025, "Invoicing Leagues for State Dues."

A **motion** was made by John DeYoung to approve State Policy 1025, seconded by Tommy Clary. The motion passed unanimously.

Rule changes for 2020

John DeYoung reported that the following changes and clarification are posted on the State website (in a December 10, 2019, memo from Steven Tellefsen):

1. Certification of completion for Coaching Education and Abuse Prevention Training for all rostered coaches as required in Rule 0.04-4. (All Divisions)
2. The four-team minimum is no longer required for 13-Year-olds and 16-Year-olds Prep Leagues. (Babe Ruth Baseball)

Clarification – Wireless communication devices are not allowed; however, electronic scoring devices are permitted. No device on the field or in the dugout may be used as a means of communication. (All Divisions)

Waiver process review

A "blanket waiver request" for less than 4 teams in a league (Rule 0.02-1) and for less than 12 players on a team (Rule 0.05-1) was approved by Rob Connor. They are available for download from the State website.

Paul mentioned that players from a league that cancels its 2020 regular season may request to play in a neighboring league if the neighboring league is able to play its season. The District Commissioner must submit a new boundary listing the additional territory to the State Commissioner and state that it is only for the 2020 season. These players will be eligible for tournament play.

2020 State baseball tournament host leagues and contract payment and status

John DeYoung reported that to date hosting payments have been received from 4 of the 10 State baseball tournaments. The host leagues for 2020 State tournaments are posted on the State website. Changes of dates are expected pending decisions from Babe Ruth League, Inc. (BRL) by mid-May. Changes of host leagues are expected for leagues that 1) have decided to cancel their season and 2) leagues that cannot host during the changed dates.

Estimate of teams from each District in State baseball tournaments (not discussed)

2020 Southeast Regional and World Series tournaments in Virginia (not discussed)

Regional and World Series tournament locations and reporting dates (not discussed)

Parents Gate Pass Program Fee schedule for 2020 (not discussed)

Review of 2020 Tournament Team Checklist (not discussed)

2020 State softball tournament hosts (not discussed)

2020 State tournament host workshop (not discussed)

Assignment of State representatives to State tournaments

Paul Link informed the group of the State tournament representatives as follows:

State Representative Assignments for 2020 State Tournaments

Baseball Tournaments

Date	Age Group	Host League	State Representative(s)
July 2	Rookie	Gainesville-Haymarket	Dave Cogar Ray Walker George Burke
July 2	9s	Glen Allen	Curtis Moore
July 9	10s	Lynnhaven	Brandon Currence Nancy Currence
July 2	11s70	Arlington	Sheri Zimmerman
July 2	12s60	RARO	Ken Bosserman
July 9	12s70	Williamsburg	Brandon Currence Nancy Currence Paul Link
July 16	13s	NFC	Sheri Zimmerman John DeYoung
July 16	14s	Winchester	John Kemper George Burke
July 16	13-15s	Arlington	Myron Struck Pat O'Brien
July 9	16-18s	Manassas	Dave Cogar John DeYoung Paul Link

Softball Tournaments

July 9	All (8U –16U)	Stafford	Curtis Moore Don Gowen Dave Cogar
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These assignments are posted on the tournament brackets page of the State website.

Buddy Ball plans for 2020

Don Gowen noted that, owing to the health risk to these players, Buddy Ball events are on hold.

T-Ball tournament plans for 2020 (not discussed)

Awards for State tournaments

Award orders for both State patches and awards are ready to be released, but the orders are on hold pending tournament decisions.

Virginia Babe Ruth Umpires Association (VBRUA) and compensation schedule for 2020

Baseball

Rookie	\$55.00
9s-10s-11s-12s60	\$60.00
11s70, 12s70	\$65.00
13-15s and 16-18s	\$80.00

Softball

8U	\$55.00
10U-12U	\$60.00
14U-18U	\$80.00

Umpire training schedule update

Donny Rose, Bruce Frye, and George Burke reported that five baseball umpire training sessions and one softball training session have already been held. There have been 148 baseball umpires and 20 softball umpires trained so far. Seven junior umpires have been trained.

Future umpire training meeting consolidation

Donny Rose explained that efforts were being made consolidate the location of training sessions in future years because the current schedule with Saturday and Sunday sessions for 5 or 6 weeks in a row was straining the limited time of the instructors.

Umpire assignment policy for District, State, and Regional 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.

Washington Nationals Champions Day 2020

This year, the celebration of 12-year-olds State Champions in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia is scheduled for September 1, but that date will probably be changed, if it is held at all. As in 2019, the State will not be paying for tickets for players' parents and siblings who attend this event.

Babe Ruth College Scholarship Program review (June 30 deadline) and Jaime Horn Memorial Softball Scholarship review (September 1 deadline)

These programs provide 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. Application forms are in the Document Download Center on the Virginia Babe Ruth website. Details are available from Babe Ruth headquarters or by phone at 800-880-3143.

Review of grant programs and application deadlines

The Virginia Babe Ruth Grant Program awards financial grants to chartered Babe Ruth leagues within Virginia Babe Ruth'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 our reserves.

Each applicant must submit an official grant application form (available from the State Commissioner) and have it approved by the appropriate District Commissioner. Each project submitted must have a separate application form.

General discussion

Paul reported that the new catcher's chest protector rule will only apply to high school players for the 2020 season. The NCAA will implement the rule in 2021. There has been no guidance on when it will be implemented for the youth leagues.

Tommy Clary, following a suggestion by Don Gowen, concluded the 2020 Spring Meeting with a prayer for a resolution of the current COVID-19 crisis and a return to Babe Ruth baseball and softball activities.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:24 p.m.