



BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

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



Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

MINUTES

September 19, 2010

Dorey Park Recreation Building
7200 Dorey Park Drive
Varina, Virginia

In Attendance

Don Rose, State Commissioner
Don Gowen, Asst State Comm. /Softball Opns
Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner
Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Comm.
Paul Link, District 7 Commissioner
Todd Stebbing, District 3 Commissioner
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm.
Chris Crane, District 8 Baseball Comm.
Kevin Causey, Central Umpire Consultant
George Burke, Northern Umpire Consultant
Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Baseball Comm.

John DeYoung, Asst State Comm. /Baseball Opns
Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer
John Armentrout, Asst State Comm. /Compliance
Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner
Nancy Currence, New Kent BRL
Phil Larcomb, District 9 Commissioner
Glenn Spangler, District 4 Softball Comm.
Kenny Loveless, District 8 Softball Commissioner
Rick Bill, District 8 Asst. Softball Commissioner
Bruce Frye, Asst. Softball UIC, South
Jackie Hardman, Sandston Babe Ruth League

Don Rose, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:43 pm.

Tommy Clary offered the invocation, dedicating the day's business to the benefits of Virginia's baseball- and softball-playing kids.

By unanimous vote, the reading of the minutes of the Spring meeting was waived.

Dave Gushee reported that the State treasury contained, as of 9/19, \$19,368.91 in the checking account (compared with \$17,345.26 in 2009) and \$22,712.51 in mutual funds (compared to \$15,497.23 in 2009). A number of expected expenses, including State Officer expenses, have not yet been submitted, but from informal estimates of those expenses, it looks like the budget for the year will be close to balanced.

OLD BUSINESS

State Tournaments

BASEBALL

The State Tournaments went off well overall. At the 8s level, it was noted that five of eight

teams had not paid the gate fees as of late in the tournament. This led to a general discussion of how best to make sure that the managers involved at all tournament levels recognized the obligation to pay the gate fees, due before the tournaments start. As a result of the discussion, the Managers Tournament Information Packet (MTIP) wording with respect to gate fees (or alternatively tournaments where attendees would pay entrance fees) could be made more explicit and effective, for example by adding a notation on the checklist.

Also at the 8s level, the most valuable player was selected from the runner-up team, leading to some complaints. The State, District, and local officials at this meeting agreed that such complaints are not appropriate; the MVP can be selected from any of the competing teams, and there are ample precedents for this, not only in Virginia but everywhere throughout organized baseball and other sports.

John DeYoung reported that several really lopsided scores occurred in a couple of these tournaments (57-6 and 41-1, for example). Discussion evoked several suggestions to cope with such mismatches, with one thought being to empower Tournament Directors to waive the standard 10-run rule provided that the losing coach agrees. The issue will be revisited at the Spring meeting.

Ken Bosserman described a problem with 11-60 tournament rosters differing from the terms of the Letter of Eligibility and differing from the regular season rosters. It turns out that similar problems occur with 11-70, 12-60, and 12-70 tournaments, highlighting some ambiguities in the rules and policy guidelines at these levels. Tommy Clary added a problem he ran into at the 13s tournament, where identifying the numbers of games played by 13-year-olds who played at both the Prep level and up in the 13-15 level was not possible from the records the leagues brought to the tournament. These issues were tabled for further discussion at the Spring meeting; they will be raised at the Southeast Regional meeting to be held next month.

Concern over the way that various tournament officials deal with the Protest Committee – namely that there is occasional confusion as to how the system works, and other occasions where Protest Committees are neither created and staffed or properly called on. This issue will be reviewed by the State officers and suggestions as to how to improve training and communication might be developed for consideration at the Spring meeting.

Phi Larcomb reported that the specially-specified baseballs required by national Babe Ruth to be used in tournament play used in the 11-70 tournament that he was involved in were “like mush.” One or two contacts with bats, and they were smashed seriously out of round. Others with experience with that brand of balls reported similar experiences. Not good. One suggestion: Tournament Directors would be well advised to consider having an alternative supply of balls either on hand or readily accessible.

SOFTBALL

All six were held in Varina. Don Gowen reported that most went well.

Regional Tournaments

Virginia hosted one Regional in 2010. The Cal Ripken 9s was hosted by Varina. Don Gowen reported no significant problems.

World Series

The 14s World Series was held in Purcellville. John DeYoung reported that it was an interesting one. Several 14s World Series records, such as most RBIs by a player, were broken. The fact that the record for most hits in a game (4) was shared by seven players and last done in 2002 but was equaled by seven more players in this year's World Series led him to question whether officials during the seven years since may have missed a record or two. John also reported that the computerized system used to record the statistics had not been pretested and did not work correctly. The paper scorebook pages had to be entered into the game program after each game. The lesson learned is that you had better pretest the statistics program before the tournament so you won't have to resort to such time-consuming and error-fraught manual approaches.

The 16U World Series was hosted by Varina. This was the first year that housing was not provided. Some teams apparently weren't notified in advance of their arrival, but those problems were resolved quickly. Don Gowen found one girl's performance truly outstanding. Jordan Garrett, a pitcher from North Carolina's Series winning team Henderson/Vance, recorded 114 strikeouts, about twice the previous record. A truly amazing performance, Don said.

Update on VRPS Exhibition

John Armentrout reported that BRLVa had a booth at the annual conference of the Virginia Recreation and Park Society, held in Hampton the previous Sunday and Monday. Our booth was right at the exhibit entrance and thus got a lot of visitors, some of whom showed some interest in bringing leagues, both baseball and softball, into BRLVa. John reported that BRLVa had been given the same exhibit space for last year's conference.

Open Discussion on the 2010 Season

The main item discussed was national Babe Ruth's computer system and some of the subtle problems that arise. One is that national accepts chartering systems independent of any input from the State. Since there are occasions when the State has reasons not to accept, we are not able to prevent the acceptance. Another is that rosters filed with national are in the national data base, but there is no automatic notification to the State that the rosters have been filed. Further, the national data base informs the league that their roster filing requirements have been completed, whereas the State officials will have to go onto the national data base, locate the rosters, and print them out in order to have them on hand on paper. The burden on the State officials to get at, download, and print out the rosters is unacceptable. Don Rose requires that hard copies of rosters be delivered to him, yet the instructions on the national data base are to the contrary.

These issues will be raised at the Southeast Regional meeting next month.

NEW BUSINESS

2011 Budget

Dave Gushee pointed out that 2010 is the second year of operation under current budgeting policies. Since the second year is not yet complete, and since everything seems to be in good order in terms of economic viability, he recommended that the 2011 budget be a repeat of the 2010 budget. The suggestion met with general approval and will be implemented.

Southeast Region Hall of Fame

Bob Brown of Winchester has been selected for membership. His induction will take place at the Southeast Regional meeting next month in South Carolina.

Team Certification

Attached to this meeting's agenda was a draft statement requiring each league sending teams to State tournaments to certify that if they win the State tournament, they will proceed through the tournament trail until they lose or until the end. This proposal is stimulated by the number of leagues that have won State tournaments and then decided not to go further. This disrupts the Regional tournament brackets and schedules and disenfranchises State teams that would have won the State tournaments were the defaulting teams not in the State tournaments.

This subject has been discussed at earlier State meetings. No consensus has developed on how to respond to the issue. An alternative suggestion was put forth – that leagues post a refundable deposit to the State treasury prior to the State tournaments, to be refunded when a team loses or when a winning team does indeed go forward. This suggestion got a mixed review. No decisions were made, other than the issue be discussed again at the Spring meeting.

1004 Policy

This policy recently adopted states that once the State tournament brackets have been drawn (some two weeks before the tournament start date, when a team expecting to participate drops out, its games will be forfeited but the bracket remains unchanged. This year, at one of our State tournaments, a team dropped out after the brackets were drawn. The team was on the short side of the bracket, leading to the possibility that a team in that bracket, if undefeated, could get to the finals while playing just two or three games, whereas a team in the long side would have to win at least two more games to get to the finals. The policy as written does not permit any other option than the one stated.

After lots of discussion, it was VOTED to authorize State officials to redraw the brackets within that last two-week period if, in their collective judgment, equity would be better served. The discussion included the consensus that such an option would not need to be invoked very often,

so the purpose of the policy would continue to be fulfilled.

Realignment of Districts 6 and 7 into District 13

Numbers of players are declining in both Districts, so that at some age levels there are no teams to compete in District tournaments. Similarly, when there is only one league in an age bracket, that team gets to the State without playing in a District tournament, unfair to teams that must compete at the District level and unhelpful to that one team, in that it isn't tournament-tested when it arrives at the State tournament.

The proposed change would provide for two District Commissioners, one of administration, one for field operations, and two teams from the combined Districts would go forward to the State tournaments. One of the benefits would be that, since each District has only one softball league, the new one would have two, thus providing for District competition.

No consensus emerged on this proposal. One major concern was that the Rule Book provides that a District can send only one team to the next level (host teams excepted). After the meeting adjourned, Don Rose exercised his executive authority and declared the combination to take place as a pilot in 2011. Any conflict with the Rule Book would be addressed as necessary.

Other District Realignments

District 3 has too few teams for good District competition. District 4 has too many. There has been some discussion that Districts 8 and 9 should be recombined (they separated 3 years ago). Other Districts may also be improved via redistricting. No action was taken on this; now that the issue has been raised, it will be brought up again at the Spring meeting.

Determining Hosts for 2011 State Tournaments

Don Rose reported that he found it very difficult administratively to extract signed contracts and tournament fee checks for many of the host leagues. He suggested that leagues proposing to host submit the check and a signed contract as their good faith proposal. The State officials would select the league host and return the checks to the unsuccessful bidders.

This suggestion was not viewed favorably for a number of reasons, which Don recognized as relevant. After discussion, it was agreed that contracts would be sent to the District Commissioners expecting to host State tournaments. The District Commissioners would then pursue the decision process to completion and press the ultimate tournament host to cut the check and sign the contract well before tournament time draws near.

Rotation Among Districts to Host State Tournaments

The rotation schedule will remain in force. It is on the State Web site through last year (2010 season) and will be updated for the 2011 through 2015 seasons later this fall.

Format for 16-18 State Tournament

With the large number of 16-18 teams that were available to compete at the State level when District tournaments were not held in 2009, gathering all the teams in one place is very unwieldy in both time and space. It was decided after discussion to plan to hold area-wide (probably pool play) tournaments at three or four locations throughout the State, with the winners (and perhaps the runners-up) journeying to an additional site for a single- or double-elimination tournament to determine the ultimate State winner. The details were not resolved; they will be dealt with at the Spring meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer