



BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

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



Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

MINUTES

September 20, 2009

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
Paul Link, District 7 Commissioner
Cliff Stewart, Varina Baseball/Softball
Todd Stebbing, District 3 Commissioner
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm
Chris Crane, District 8 Baseball Comm.

Roy Brewer, District 5 Commissioner
Dave Gushee, Sec/Treasurer
John Armentrout, Asst State Comm. /Compliance
Nancy Currence, Dist. 1 Asst. Baseball Comm.
Gayle Clary, Dist. 2 Asst. Baseball Comm.
Phil Larcomb, District 9 Commissioner
Glenn Spangler, Dist. 4 Softball Comm.
Kenny Loveless, Greater Manassas League

Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire in Chief
Curtis Moore, Dist. 1 Asst Softball Comm.

Bruce Frye, Asst. Softball UIC, South
Robert Duncan, District 10 Commissioner

Don Rose, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:30 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 9/30, \$17,345.26, including a \$5,000.00 bridge loan, in the checking account (compared with \$2,989.47 in 2008) and \$15,497.23 in mutual funds (compared to \$17,167.12 in 2008). 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 T-Ball level, it was noted that some teams

wanted to compete, while others wanted to have a good time. It is probably not wise to generalize too much, as there were only four teams involved. At one tournament, all the umpires were local; some parents perceived that they were "homers." This observation lends further support to the growing VBRUA, which will soon be assigning umpires to every State tournament to include some out of-town ump's, which should avoid this perception, which for the most part is just a perception and not valid. At another tournament, the host arranged for the score to be kept on a computer. Thus, there was no official scorebook, which led to several procedural problems. Don Rose emphasized that, despite the wonders of modern digital technology, each tournament should have an official scorekeeper keeping score in an official score book. 20 teams competed in the 16-18 tournament, which consumed two weeks. It was mostly a great success, despite the travel issues.

SOFTBALL

Don Gowen reported that most went well. A significant issue arose when a number of the tournament winners chose not to go forward to the Regional tournaments. This issue was discussed later in more detail.

Regional Tournaments

Virginia hosted six Regionals in 2009. The Cal Ripken 10s was hosted by Arlington. Staunton hosted the Ripken 12-60s. The 16-18s was held in Purcellville, hosted by Greater Loudoun League. Don Rose described one player who was wasting a tremendous talent with a horrible attitude problem – a deplorable loss both to the player and to baseball itself.

Varina hosted the 8U, 10U, and 12U softball Regional Tournaments. Great fun, lots of action, and a joint baseball-softball exercise, in that the State Ripken 11-60s tournament was going on at the same time on a nearby field. It was fun to watch parents and kids going back and forth to enjoy both sports.

Update on VRPS Exhibition

John Armentrout reported that BRLVa had a booth at the annual conference of the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society, held in Roanoke 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 has been given the same exhibit space for next year's conference.

Open Discussion on the 2009 Season

Phil Larcomb noted that he has seen that too many managers and coaches in both baseball and softball do not know the rules. Paul Link reported that he has noted this also and thus requires that the managers bring the tournament credentials books to him so that he can focus on the rules as well as check the credentials. John Armentrout, in his role as Assistant State Commissioner

for Training and Compliance, used the discussion to emphasize the need for ongoing training during the off-season.

Ken Bosserman raised as an issue the fact that in the Rookie level, where a pitching machine is used, there is no pitcher, and the rule are silent on limits to visits to the mound. One team in the Rookies State Tournament abused this by calling for visits so often that the game became a farce almost. Don Rose will raise this issue at the next Regional Commissioner meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

New District and League

We noted in last Fall's minutes that a league in the far southwest of the State had decided to charter with Babe Ruth (Southwest Virginia Babe Ruth League, Big Stone Gap, Virginia) and that District 10 would be activated. Robert Duncan, District 10 Commissioner, attended this meeting and was welcomed aboard after his first season with us.

Election of Officers for 2009-2011

Nominating Committee members Roy Brewer and Phil Larcomb reported that all of the current State officers were willing to serve another two years and thus nominated them as a slate. They were elected unanimously.

Budget

Dave Gushee reported that the budget summary he sent out prior to the meeting shows that the probable result for this year is that the budget will be close to balanced. The estimate depends primarily on the submittal of final expenses for the State officers, who have indicated that their expenses will be similar to last year's.

Dave raised one budget detail not explicitly treated during discussion of last year's budget discussion – namely, the mileage reimbursement rate. For about a decade, it has been \$0.26 per mile. It was implicitly changed in preparation of the current year's budget to \$0.55 cents per mile (the rate used by the national Babe Ruth office). Dave asked that the mileage reimbursement rate be acted on explicitly, as it is a significant part of our costs. It was VOTED to change the reimbursement rate to that used by Babe Ruth League, Inc., which is currently \$0.55 per mile. The vote included a retroactive adjustment to the current budget year.

With that change, it was VOTED to approve the 2009-10 budget continuing current policies. The final financial results will be reported to the Board when completed after the fiscal year ends (October 31).

2010 State Tournaments

T-Ball. Don asked whether we should schedule a competitive T-Ball tournament or whether it

should be an invitation fun experience. The Southeast Region had a supposedly competitive tournament schedule for this year; it turned out to be a local fun time instead, so the Region has removed T-Ball from the Regional Tournament schedule. After discussion, which echoed the earlier report of our experience this year, it was decided to hold two State invitational T-Ball tournaments – one in the northern part of the State and one in the southern part.

Buddy Ball. Herndon is considering offering a Buddy Ball day. If Herndon decides not to proceed, Don will ask Glen Allen if it wishes to hold one. As has been done in earlier years, it would be held in April, before the weather gets hot.

7-Year-Old Rookies. The one scheduled for this year had only five participants. It was decided not to schedule one for 2010, although if interest develops for an informal invitational arrangement, one could be approved.

The Rest of the Tournaments. John Armentrout passed around a proposed schedule showing the likely dates for District, State, and Regional Tournaments and the World Series. John had tentatively assigned the various Districts to host the various tournaments in line with the rotation policy currently in force. Several changes were approved, and in a few cases the decision was postponed until further discussion, scheduled to take place in the next few weeks. The final schedule will be posted on the State Web site. Of particular note is the softball side, where Varina offered to hold all six tournaments and District 10 offered to host the 12U tournament, provided a potential conflict over field availability could be resolved. Varina would be willing to host the 12U or not host it as the District 10 issue is worked out.

Tournament Trail. John Armentrout reviewed the discussion at the Executive Committee meeting concerning the number of teams dropping out of tournaments either part way through or even after becoming the tournament winner. He passed around a draft document that would when signed by a League President, commit the league's teams to participating in the tournament trail until elimination. If a league's tournament team then did drop out, the league would be suspended from the tournament trail at all age levels for two years. The ensuing discussion showed a significant concurrence that teams dropping out was – at the least -- a situation not to be avidly sought after, but a wide difference of opinion about what to do about the situation. Suggestions ranged from having the coaches and managers sign the pledge and be the ones suspended if their teams dropped out, to taking the manager's credit card and charge him(her) a penalty of several hundred dollars if the team drops out. No agreement was reached. The District Commissioners were asked to contact John Armentrout with suggestions. The issue will be revisited at the Spring meeting.

Alliance Tournaments. The Board created the opportunity this year for leagues to participate in non-tournament trail invitational tournaments with players not named to tournament trail teams. The opportunity did not lead to any such tournaments. Don Rose offered to set up such tournaments at 12 and under levels next year to see what might evolve.

Bylaw Changes. The five elected State officers have been meeting periodically to consider issues to bring to the full Board. It was proposed that the group be named "State Executive

Board or State Executive Committee” and the bylaws be changed accordingly. The name “State Executive Committee” was chosen.

It was also proposed that the position of State Umpire in Chief (UIC) be created, along with four Umpire Consultants, two for baseball and two for softball, geographically located in the northern Virginia area and in the central Virginia area. Proposed position descriptions were put forth.

The Board VOTED to amend the bylaws in accordance with the draft provided. The revised bylaws will be posted on the State Web site.

Umpires. Donny Rose, in one of his first actions as state UIC, proposed that three umpires be used in all State Tournament games at levels of 11-70, 12-70, and up through 16-18. The purpose is to provide umpires the opportunity to note balks; with two umpires, in some cases with runners on base, no field ump is in position to see whether or not the pitcher’s leg breaks the plane. The Board VOTED to approve this recommendation. The gate fee calculators will be updated to take this change into account.

Southeast Region Hall of Fame. The Southeast Region has established a Hall of Fame to recognize individuals and leagues who have made major contributions to Babe Ruth baseball in the Region over many years of service. Don Rose and the Greater Loudoun Babe Ruth League are among the first group selected.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer

View the Approved Bylaw Changes online within our Web site’s ‘Operations’ link.