



# BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

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



## Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

### MINUTES

September 20, 2015

Dorey Park Recreation Building  
7200 Dorey Park Drive  
Henrico, Virginia

#### In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner

Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm. /Softball Opns.

Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner

Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner

Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm.

Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Commissioner

Bob Rhyne, District 7 Commissioner

George Burke, State Ump Consultant, BB

Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Commissioner

John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm. /Baseball Opns.

Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer

Nancy Currence, District 1 Asst. Comm.

Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner

Glenn Spangler, District 4 Softball Comm.

Phil Larcomb, Asst. State Comm. /Training

Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief

Bruce Frye, South/Central Softball Consultant

Keith Beagle, Varina Youth Sports

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

Tommy Clary offered the invocation, dedicating the day's business to the benefit 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 9/19/2015, \$5085.65 in the checking account (compared with \$5894.56 in 2014) and, as of 8/31, \$74,446.20 in mutual funds (compared to \$75,227.98 in 2014). The funds value held about even over the year, despite receipt of some \$4500 in capital gains and \$1650 in dividends, having peaked at about \$79,000 earlier in the year and being affected by the recent market volatility. 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 budgeted expenses for the year will be exceeded as a result of a somewhat more expensive Tournament Directors Workshop.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **State Tournaments**

#### **TRAINING FOR TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS**

In June, Phil Larcomb, Assistant State Commissioner for Training and Compliance, held the second statewide Workshop for State Tournament Directors. This workshop has been designed to help bring these folks up to speed on how to prepare for and then operate the tournaments. This is a hard job, in that so many are doing this for the first time. Phil reported that, as was the case last year, everyone there said they really appreciated it. John DeYoung echoed that sentiment, finding that the reporting of game results and other feedback, including many fewer questions from the tournament sites, went measurably more smoothly than in previous years. The Workshop will become an annual event.

#### **BASEBALL**

Game results and Tournament winners are posted on the State Web site.

John DeYoung summarized the tournament experiences by reporting that, in general, the tournaments all went off well. There were a few minor glitches. Shoulder patches for the tournament champions were distributed to the tournament directors at the workshop described above. They were taped to the boxes in which the trophies were supplied. In three cases, they were lost (perhaps in transit between the workshop and the tournaments or discarded with the trophy boxes) and had to be remade after the fact. Next year, more attention will be paid to the presence of the patches with the trophies, in hope that these losses will be avoided and that the champions can get the patches at the same time that they get their trophies. Several other problems arose, largely from safety issues. None were generic; they were resolved case by case and no policy changes were deemed needed.

#### **SOFTBALL**

Don Gowen reported that most went well. Shenandoah Recreational League was host. All leagues were invited to participate. Even so, participation was less than had been hoped for at a couple of age levels. Don plans to work more closely with the leagues next year to keep them aware of their welcome at the State tournaments.

State tournament results are posted on the State Web site.

### **Regional Tournaments**

Virginia hosted three baseball Regional Tournaments in 2015 – the Cal Ripken 10s at Glen Allen, the 11/70s at Stafford, and the Babe Ruth 16-18 Year-olds in Colonial Heights. All went well, with excellent weather.

Virginia teams won four Regional Tournaments. In baseball, Glen Allen won the 9s, Gainesville-Haymarket won the 14s, and Greater Fairfax won the 16-18s. In softball, New Kent won the 12Us.

### **World Series**

Virginia hosted no World Series in 2015.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Election of Officers for 2016-2017**

All the incumbents for State offices were re-nominated. There were no nominations from the floor. It was VOTED unanimously to re-elect the incumbent Officers:

State Commissioner – Paul Link

Assistant State Commissioner for Baseball Operations – John DeYoung

Assistant State Commissioner for Softball Operations – Don Gowen

Assistant State Commissioner, Training and Compliance – Phil Larcomb

Secretary-Treasurer – Dave Gushee

### **2015 Budget**

Dave Gushee pointed out that 2015 is the seventh year of operation under current budgeting policies. Although the year is not yet complete, it appears that the 2014 outcome will differ a bit from the four previous years (in which operating revenue exceeded operating expenses by about one dollar per chartered team) in that expenses will exceed revenue by about a dollar per team. One new category of expenses and increases in two other categories are primarily responsible for the change: the Washington Nationals Champions Day (new), the Tournament Directors Workshop, and Umpire Training Clinics.

Dave reminded the Board that the State reserves have increased significantly over the past 7 years, primarily because the State Commissioner has donated his expenses back to us at the end of each year and the stock market has been strong. The reserves now represent more than 2 years' cash flow but will not increase this year. This is partly from the increased expenses and partly from the stock market's volatility which, at meeting time, had the market down some 6% from last year's levels. Despite that decline our reserves are about the same as last year; dividends and capital gains distributions made up for the price declines.

At this meeting, the Board VOTED to continue the current budget policy.

### **State Dues Collection Policy**

Every year in the first 2 weeks of June, there has been an intensive flurry of activity to complete the collection of State dues from the leagues. Most of the unpaid dues are the result of late adjustments in numbers of teams as late registrations occur (largely in the 13-18 age brackets as

a result of unpredictable high school schedule completion changes) and from problems leagues have in completing their rosters in the Babe Ruth on-line system. The State Commissioner has suggested that we bill each league at the beginning of the year on the basis of its previous year's final numbers, requiring payment by the time of the league's first game, with reconciliation of the numbers against the current year's final count later in the year but not affecting delivery of Letters of Eligibility (LOE) on the basis of incomplete reconciliation (other reasons for ineligibility for LOEs would still apply). The District Commissioners would press on their leagues, as Opening Day approached, to pay.

The Secretary-Treasurer sees many issues, such as the creation of many more invoices than the current system requires, on the one hand, and lots of invoices and checks for relatively small numbers of dollars, that such a system would generate, on the other. Either that, or a significant additional bookkeeping requirement to carry forward to the following year the credits and debits that would arise.

The ensuing discussion shed some heat but no clear light on the issues. It was decided that the issue would be tabled for now, with the State Commissioner and Secretary-Treasurer, having heard the feedback from the District Commissioners, deliberating on the various alternative ways of approaching the problem.

### **Donation to Babe Ruth**

It has been some time since the Board discussed the current policy of donating \$500 each year to the Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund. Steven Tellefsen, Babe Ruth League, Inc. CEO, has sent a letter of appreciation each year and a few words about the uses to which the money in the Fund are put. There is a general feeling among Board members that they would like more detail on how the Fund spends its money. It was VOTED to make the donation again this year but to ask explicitly for more specific information about the Fund's operations.

Subsequent to the meeting, Paul Link and Steven Tellefsen exchanged emails about this. The exchange follows:

From Paul to Steven: "In past years, Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia has made contributions to the Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund. At our recent State meeting on Sunday, we voted to continue this contribution, but a number of questions were raised by younger Board Members who did not know Ron. The basic question is about status of the Fund itself and how the donations are used. Is the fund a tax exempt 501(c) 3 entity? Do you file a Form 990 with the IRS (in a preliminary search of the IRS listings, we cannot find one)? We just want to be sure we are sending the donations in the correct name or if this all now goes through the Babe Ruth Alumni Association."

Steven replied: "Thank you for your email and hope you are doing well. The Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund is doing well and has assisted many players and families over the years. The fund is used for scholarships, we award one Presidential Scholarship from the Ron Tellefsen Fund. The funds are used when a need is relayed to us for a player or league that has found

themselves with a serious financial need. The fund is also used to assist players that due to certain circumstances cannot afford equipment, etc., to play the great game of softball and baseball.

“The Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund is not a separate entity but part of the overall Babe Ruth League, Inc. reporting. It is tracked separately within our accounting system as restricted funds. It would fall under our 501(c) 3 tax exemption. The balance is reported on a separate line of the notes of explanation in our audited financial statements. It is not part of the Babe Ruth Alumni Association. Any donations should be made to the Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund. Ron was about helping kids and families and that is basically what we use the fund for.”

Our thanks go to Steven for this quick and informative response.

### **Donation to the Don Rose Sr. Youth Scholarship Fund**

Don Rose, Jr. has been spearheading an initiative to set up a scholarship fund in the name of his father for Loudoun County high school graduates who have been active in youth sports, reflect the values of participation and character that Don held dear, and wish to further their education. Academic performance will not be the determining factor; sports participation will. The Fund has been declared by IRS to be a 501(c) (3) entity and thus exempt from Federal income tax.

The Board members all remember Don with grateful affection and respect for his contributions not only to Babe Ruth but to a whole range of youth sports. It was VOTED to donate to this Fund a sustaining \$1,000 and to reconsider at each Fall meeting the amount of the annual donation. The Board recognizes that the Fund scholarships will go only to Loudoun County youth and expressed its willingness to consider requests from similar entities in the State with similar purposes.

### **Determining Hosts for 2016 State Tournaments**

John DeYoung polled the District Commissioners about whether their Districts would be able to host State Tournaments in accordance with the rotation schedule (posted on the State Web page). As things stand at meeting time, the line-up for 2016 is as follows:

<u>Tournament</u>	<u>State Host</u>	<u>Regional Host</u>
Rookies	D2 (90% certain)	
9s	D8	
10s	D7	
11s60	D5 (DC not present)	
11s70	D4	Williamsburg
12s60	D9 (DC not present)	Glen Allen
12s70	D3	Glen Allen
13s	D4	
14s	D3	Colonial Heights
13-15s	D1	
16-18s	D8	

John DeYoung plans to send an email message to Baseball District Commissioners with updated information on 2016 State baseball tournament hosts and a request for information on: 1) host league name, 2) name of field(s), 3) tournament director (or other contact), 4) phone number(s), and 5) email addresses, noting that early availability of this information assists with planning for preparation and emailing of tournament contracts, distributing MTIP questionnaires, scheduling of the Tournament Director training workshop, and assigning tournament officials. In addition, John will remind the District Commissioners of their request to have an opportunity to get their leagues' opinion on whether to have a State tournament for the 11s60 age group before sending their input to Paul and John. There were only two teams (and no host team) in the 2015 11s60 State Tournament in Chesapeake. The Southeast Region discontinued this age group following the 2011 tournament season.

Don Gowen, on the other hand, reported that there was no agreed-upon rotation schedule for softball State Tournaments. Softball folks report that they prefer playing all their tournaments at the same location and enjoying the large number of fans showing up. A major issue is finding enough communities able to hold five or six State Tournaments at the same time to rotate them around the State and not going back to a couple of places over and over again. Despite the general principle of spreading the hosting around to various parts of the State, he is talking with the Varina League, which has expressed a willingness to commit as host for 5 years. After some discussion, it was VOTED to accept Varina as host for the next 2 years for all the softball State tournaments, with an option to extend thereafter. Varina will also host all the softball Regional Tournaments in 2016.

John DeYoung reminded the District Commissioners to remind the host leagues to use the correct terminology for their tournaments. The tournaments are Rookies (8s), 9s, 10s, 11s, 12s, 13s, 14s, 13-15s, and 16-18s; no U's anywhere, unlike softball.

### **New Leagues**

Preliminary discussions are under way with three possibilities: Chesapeake City, currently playing in the PONY League; Pound, VA (near the Kentucky border) playing in Little League; and Bristol, VA (near the Tennessee border) also currently playing in Little League. The Board recommended that Paul ask Kentucky and Tennessee to consider these last two communities, as they are so far from any other Virginia leagues and so close to leagues in those States. Paul will do so.

### **New Babe Ruth Web Page**

Paul Link reported that Babe Ruth headquarters has upgraded its Web site. He commented that, as usual, this was done without consultation with any Virginia State, District, and League officials. His initial exploration of the revised site revealed that it looks like a real improvement in several dimensions – one in particular being that the names in the rosters can be sorted on any heading, not just first names as had heretofore been the case. How it will work out in practice will be determined as next year's chartering, insuring, and roster activities proceed. Paul

reported that the programming and help desk support staff has expanded as a result of the new hosting company.

### **MLB Rule Changes for 2015**

Major League Baseball has completed a major revision/restructuring of its rulebook and produced not only the revised book but a table identifying how the numbers on the new rules related to the numbers on the old rules. How this will affect the 2016 Babe Ruth rulebooks is not yet clear.

### **Roster and Database Issues**

Paul Link notes that he has seen some league rosters in the database with four coaches named. The rule is three coaches max. The database program allows four, despite the rule setting the maximum at three. It is not yet clear whether this glitch has been dealt with in the revised database.

### **Umpire Issues**

**Regional Umpire Recommendations.** Donny Rose pointed out that, for a Virginia umpire to be selected to perform in a Regional tournament, he must be registered in the Region. To get registered, the umpire must apply to the Region, which then asks the State Commissioner for his recommendation. The State Commissioner must approve the application.

**South/Central Virginia State Umpire Consultant.** This position is vacant (George Burke is Acting). Paul Link and Donny Rose asked the District Commissioners to ask their league officials for recommendations for the position from the umpires with whom they are familiar so that the position may be filled ASAP. The candidate must have enough free time to organize and conduct training clinics.

**Number of Umpires in District and State Tournaments.** The policy for State tournaments is clear; Virginia follows the Regional requirements. There has been some uncertainty about the policy for District tournaments. After discussion, Paul Link articulated the consensus of the discussion: The District Commissioner will determine the numbers of umpires to be used, based on his or her knowledge of the local economy and the age level of play involved.

**Umpire Fee Schedule for 2016.** This issue was not discussed. The State follows the Southeast Region in setting these fees. Paul Link subsequently reported that the 2015 fee schedule will be in place for 2016.

**Appointment of Umpire Consultants.** This item was also not discussed. Paul Link subsequently reported that he has reappointed all incumbents for 2016–17:

Donny Rose – Umpire-in-Chief

George Burke – Baseball Umpire Consultant, North

Paul Espinosa – Softball Umpire Consultant, North  
George Burke (Acting) – Baseball Umpire Consultant, South/Central  
Bruce Frye – Softball Umpire Consultant, South/Central

## **State Tournament Issues**

**Tournament Programs and Pictures.** The goal is for all teams to be in full uniforms in the team picture. In some cases, some of the coaches have been in shorts or trousers. Does anyone care? Apparently some folks do and asked the Board to express its view. After discussion, the Board said that it endorses the goal but understands why, in some cases, a team may not have enough time to “do it right.” In such cases, it has no problem with “the best that the team can do.”

**Distribution of State Tournament Patches.** As reported earlier, the patches were lost along the way in several cases. In an attempt to prevent that happening again, the Board consensus suggestion was that the patches be put in baggies and delivered to the Tournament Directors at the Tournament Directors Workshop, separate from the trophies and handed out separately as we do with the Team Champion Banners.

**Review of 16-18 State Tournament Process.** Paul Link reviewed the process – since the distribution of 16-18 teams around the State is so uneven, the State Commissioner paired teams for two-team Area tournaments as best he could to minimize travel for the teams. The winners of the paired team tournaments then competed in the State Tournament. It worked well, Paul reported, based on the feedback he has received. The District Commissioners present agreed. Paul read a dissenting opinion he received from District 6 Commissioner Bob Gerber. The Board VOTED to do it the same way next year, with the State Commissioner determining the pairings, which may be different in 2016 than they were in 2015.

**Softball State Tournament Waiver.** This waiver allows any softball league in the State to send teams to their age-appropriate State Tournaments. It has worked well. It was agreed to ask for this waiver again for 2016.

**Early Start Dates for 11s60 and 12s60 2016 State Tournaments.** Since the 11s60 do not have a Regional Tournament, the schedule dates for its State Tournament can be adjusted. It was decided to set it at the same date as that for the 12s60, since they are run together. The resultant start date for both is June 24.

**Noisemakers (Cow Bells, Air Horns, Boom Boxes) at State Tournaments.** Such noisemakers have made so much noise that play of the game has been negatively affected. A case in point is that the umpire call “Infield Fly” has not been heard by the other umpires or the players. At the least, this has caused confusion. Discussion showed that this concern is real. It was VOTED to rule them out. This rule would be added to the MTIP, which every tournament team gets a copy of. The penalty will be that the manager of the team whose fans are operating the noisemakers would be ejected if he and his colleagues are not able to get their fans to comply.



### **Hall of Fame Update**

Winchester Baseball's nomination to the Southeast Region Hall of Fame has been accepted. The league will be honored by Babe Ruth officials at the league's 2016 opening day ceremonies. The Board is delighted and urges officials throughout the State to make more nominations of worthy candidates – leagues, league officers, State officers, for example.

### **Policy on Compression Sleeves**

More and more players are wearing these. Is it a problem? Discussion at the meeting showed that most of the attendees did not think this was a big issue, despite the rumblings of discontent that had come to our attention. The Board decided to table the issue. The State Commissioner will bring it up at the Regional meeting next month.

### **2016 Spring Meeting**

The Washington Nationals are expanding their community relations program, of which Champions Day at Nats Park (see above) is a part. They have offered to host our Spring Meeting at Nationals Park (Red Porch Lounge) and provide the food. More information on this will be provided as it evolves.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer