



Virginia

Babe Ruth Baseball & Softball



MINUTES [amended October 22, 2021]
September 26, 2021
Courtyard by Marriott, Jefferson Meeting Room
638 Hillsdale Drive
Charlottesville, Virginia

In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner
 Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer
 John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Opns.
 Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm., Softball Opns.
 Glenn Spangler, Asst. State Comm., Training
 Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief
 George Burke, State Umpire Advisor
 Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner
 Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Commissioner

Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner
 Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm.
 Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Commissioner
 Matt Clark, District 5 Commissioner
 Pat O'Brien, District 6 Commissioner
 Sheri Zimmerman, District 7 Commissioner
 Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner
 Chris Frazier, District 10 Commissioner

[Owing to restrictions on the number of participants to comply with guidelines during the pandemic, only members of the Board of Directors of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. and other members of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. invited by the State Commissioner were able to attend the meeting (Section VII, paragraph C, of the State Bylaws was waived in this force majeure situation).]

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.

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

Reading of the minutes: By unanimous vote, the reading of the minutes of the Spring 2021 meeting was waived.

Treasurer's report: Phil Larcomb reported that the State treasury contained, as of September 26, 2021, \$2,889.75 in the checking account and \$84,297.35 in the mutual funds account for total cash and reserves of \$87,187.10. The accounts receivable balance was \$5,000.00. There were no liabilities.

Mutual funds account activity for Fiscal Year 2021: As reported at the April 18, 2021, Spring Meeting, a one-time distribution of \$10,000 was taken from the mutual funds account on April 12, 2021. The first-ever David Gushee Memorial Grant for New Leagues of \$5,000 was awarded to Wise Babe Ruth. Also, an additional \$5,000 loan was granted to Wise Babe Ruth to be paid back within 2 years. A one-time distribution of \$9,000 was taken from the mutual funds account on August 9, 2021. Five World Series grants of \$1,000 were distributed to Arlington, Williamsburg, Glen Allen, Stafford, and Rockville. Phil reminded the Board that the State reserves have increased significantly over the past year, primarily because the State Commissioner has donated his expenses back to the State at the end of

each year and the stock market has been strong. The reserves represent a positive cash flow for the period of November 2020 to the present.

OLD BUSINESS

2021 season review: Paul's summary of the 2021 season was short and concise. He explained it as follows: We played, we did well, and we had fun. He then went on to review summary statistics in detail for the season.

Baseball: Eight leagues played their inaugural season with Babe Ruth in 2021. At the same time, five leagues were not able to play again owing to a variety of reasons (pandemic, governmental restrictions, high school field availability, and overall lack of registration numbers). Although 7 leagues gained teams compared with 2019, there were 42 leagues that lost teams. In total, baseball was down 166 teams or 13.5%. Majors teams suffered the most losses (18%) in Cal Ripken, while Prep teams experienced the largest losses (36%) in Babe Ruth.

Softball: Three softball leagues played their inaugural season in 2021. Softball also had five leagues that did not play. Two leagues gained teams compared with 2019, but 15 leagues lost teams. Overall, softball leagues lost 48 teams or 28.4%. The majority of the team losses (41%) were at the 10U age group with losses at the 8U, 12U, and 14U age groups evenly spread between 21% and 28%.

Paul reviewed the importance of getting these lost players back next season. He advised all of the District Commissioners to review the summary statistics handout with their leagues and to develop a plan for increased emphasis on registration. Suggestions included: (1) in-person registration tables set up at grocery stores and sporting goods stores, (2) drive-up registrations at the field complexes (an idea successfully implemented by Wise for their inaugural season to combat pandemic issues), (3) posting informational signs advertising registration, and (4) advertising registration in local publications. Next year's numbers will be a direct reflection on our success or failure to implement these plans. Again, every league needs a plan.

Southeast Region Hall of Fame induction report: John DeYoung and Dave Cogar reported on the Hall of Fame induction ceremony for E.G. Smith, Ray Walker, and John Armentrout, which was held between the first two games of the Virginia State 14-Year-olds State tournament on Friday, July 16, at Metz Middle School in Manassas.

District reports:

D1 – Brandon reported to Paul that the play at the 10-Year-olds State tournament was the best he had ever seen and it was a shame that the Runner-up was not allowed to advance to the Regional tournament since the competition was so strong.

D2 – Tommy Clary reported that Dixie Youth Baseball has a very strong hold in this area.

D3 – Curtis Moore reported he had no issues in his District.

D4 – Ken Bosserman said that his District handled the virus well. Kenny said the State 12-Year-olds 60' tournament was one of the best he has seen in all his years as a District Commissioner.

D5 – Matt reported that Greene County is in the middle of transition of its board members. Madison was also in transition of its baseball leadership. Matt asked for help from Paul in meeting with the board members of these two leagues.

D6 – Pat O'Brien reported he had five leagues with organized fall ball leagues.

D7 – Sheri Zimmerman reported that her District had a great spring season.

D8 – Dave Cogar reported that the E.G. Smith Baseball Complex was being sold by the City of Manassas and that it is up in the air as to where the Greater Manassas Baseball League would move to in terms of a new ballpark.

D9 – No report.

D10 – Chris Frazier provided some detail on the differences between Dixie Youth Baseball and Babe Ruth League.

D11 – Paul reported that Wise launched their inaugural season with 19 baseball teams and 6 softball teams. Paul also informed the group that he is actively seeking a District Commissioner for this new District.

State tournament review (baseball): Paul reported that overall, we had a great State tournament season, and each State Representative reported on their individual tournaments. John DeYoung reported that Bill Amatucci, the tournament director for the 13–15-Year-olds State tournament at John R. Lewis High School in Springfield, held a very successful managers briefing on a virtual (Zoom) meeting on the Monday evening before the tournament. The meeting slides are available in pdf format upon request to John.

State tournament review (softball): Matt Clark and Curtis Moore said the host leagues did excellent jobs of running the State softball tournaments. Glenn Spangler added that more attention is needed concerning the shorts (color and length) being worn by team managers and coaches.

Southeast Regional and World Series—Virginia success stories: Paul reported that Virginia had one of the best postseasons in recent memory. Virginia had three Regional Champions: 9s – Arlington, 10s – Glen Allen, and 16-18s – Stafford. Virginia also had three Regional Runners-up: Major 60 – Rockville, 13-15s – Charlottesville, and the 16-18s – Manassas. Virginia had two World Series Runners-up: 9s – Arlington and 10s – Williamsburg. Paul said that the 12-Year-olds 60’ team from Rockville lost 2-1 in a semifinal game. In softball, the 8U Shenandoah Rec team placed third at the World Series.

State split discussion: Paul looked at both a two-division and a three-division split as discussed at the 2021 Spring State Meeting. Paul looked at a three-division split according to the suggestion by John Armentrout, Assistant Southeast Regional Commissioner. Although it solves any perceived travel issues, that split creates smallness resulting in two-, three-, or four-team State tournaments. Financially, it is not feasible for the State (with award expenses) or the hosts (lack of gate fees and concessions). Not to mention the significant human capital required to run three simultaneous State tournaments at all age groups.

A two-division split was studied and provided the goal of two Virginia representatives at each age level of Regional play, but it also results in increased State expenses and smaller State tournaments. Lessons have been learned from the Regional Qualifiers for softball and the value of carrying the State Champion banner. Not allowing the qualifying teams to play in the Virginia State tournament was a mistake and we have not done the Qualifiers since. After taking an informal poll of a select group of District Commissioners and State Officers, the prevailing sentiment was to request the Region allow Virginia to send both the State Champion and the State Runner-up from each age group to the Regional tournaments.

Although the rule book does not allow for this, Paul believed that our Regional Commissioner would support the concept. The Virginia numbers in terms of total leagues compared to the other States that

send two teams to the Southeast Region tournaments justify our request.

MOTION: Virginia to submit a request for a waiver of Rule 11.06. paragraph 5, requesting that Virginia be allowed to send both our State Champion and State Runner-up at all age levels to the Southeast Regional tournaments (including tournament-trail tournaments) beginning in 2022. **The motion passed unanimously.**

[After the Fall State Meeting, the following request for a waiver was sent via email to Southeast Region Commissioner John Lucas on October 5, 2021:]

Request for a Waiver of Rule 11.06, Paragraph 5

The Board of Directors of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. voted unanimously at our State Fall meeting to request that I submit a waiver requesting that Virginia be allowed to send both our State Champion and State Runner-up at all age levels to the Southeast Regional tournaments (including tournament-trail tournaments).

Background: *As a result of the internal growth within the State, Virginia is now only second in league counts to Florida. Given that all other active States within the Region have either split their States into two divisions or two separate Babe Ruth “States,” we feel that it is only fair to allow Virginia to do the same. Over the past year, our Board studied this issue in detail and looked at several different alternatives, including four different options for a two-division split and an alternative three-division split. Owing to the geography of the State [it is almost as long from east to west (468 miles) as it is from north to south (366 miles)], the goal of less travel distance for the outlying leagues is not able to be accomplished in any two-way split scenario.*

The three-way split does solve the travel issues but creates a few unintended consequences that are detrimental to the State’s Babe Ruth programs. First and foremost, it results in very small (two-, three-, or four-team) State tournaments, hardly worthy of the “State” label. Financially, that scenario is not feasible for the State (with award expenses) or for the hosts (owing to lack of sufficient income from parents’ gate fees and concessions). Also, the amount of human capital (volunteer hours) required to administer and run three simultaneous State tournaments for each age group is beyond our already-stretched resources.

When implementing the recent Softball Qualifier tournaments (which did not allow the winners to compete in the State tournaments because they had already punched their tickets to the World Series—Regional Policy), Virginia learned the hard way how much pride our leagues had in carrying the State banner to the regional tournaments. The Qualifier winners were quite vocal in their complaints about this issue, which effectively killed this tournament idea.

Conclusion: *Virginia believes that the best way to assure that the two best teams within the State advance to the Southeast Regional tournaments is to allow the two final teams (the Champion and the Runner-up) in each State tournament to participate in the regional tournament. Although there can always be upsets along the way, we still think that this is the best plan for Virginia and are requesting a waiver to allow this to happen. Further, we hope that the other States within the Region would be supportive of this plan. We think that we have the numbers and the quality of play within the State to support such a request, which would allow Virginia to be represented in the Southeast Regional tournaments in an equivalent manner to that of the other States in the Region. We also believe that this*

plan represents the best interest of all the leagues and the players within the State and respectfully ask for the Region's approval.

Note that although a waiver (in the strict sense) would have been needed for Rule 11.06, paragraph 5, in the 2020 rule book, that is not the case for the rule in the 2021 rule book. The revised rule enlarges the possible field in the Regional tournaments by adding "... all qualified or invitational teams as approved by the respective (State, Regional, or National) Commissioner in charge" to the teams winning the State championships (and the Regional tournament host—Rule 11.06, paragraph 7).

[Response to the waiver request: On October 8, 2021, John Lucas agreed to the Virginia request to send both the State Champion and Runner-up at every age group to the Southeast Regional tournaments beginning in 2022.]

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers for 2021–23: All five of 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, Baseball Operations – John DeYoung
Assistant State Commissioner, Softball Operations – Don Gowen
Secretary-Treasurer – Phillip Larcomb
Assistant State Commissioner, Training – Glenn Spangler

Fiscal Year 2022 budget: Although the fiscal year is not yet complete, it appears that the 2021 outcome will be close to budget. Final operating expenses may slightly be below operating revenue depending on final expenses in October 2021.

We will continue to use an accounting firm to handle our income tax preparation. We do this because this function continues, but our volunteers change over time. Income from the reserves is more than enough to cover the expense.

MOTION: To continue the current budget policy for 2022. **The motion passed unanimously.**

25-year volunteer pins: Paul reported that Terry Dovel, Treasurer of the Shenandoah Recreation Babe Ruth League, was the latest Virginia Babe Ruth volunteer to be recognized for 25 years of service.

2022 State baseball tournament rotation chart and host league contract deadlines: John DeYoung noted that the State baseball tournament rotation chart is posted on the State website and covers the years 2016 through 2022. Districts should confirm that they will be hosting their assigned 2022 State tournaments (8s – D4, 9s – D7, 10s – D9, 11s – D7, 12s60 – D3, 12s70 – D5, 13s – D6, 14s – D8, 13-15s – D2, 16-18s – D3, none – D1, D10) by the end of November and provide the host league name, tournament director (with phone number and email address), and field name and location by the end of January 2022. Signed contracts and the State Hosting Fee are due by the date of the State Spring Meeting. A new rotation chart will be a topic for next year's Spring Meeting and Fall Meeting. [added October 22, 2021]

2022 changes for Tournament Directors training: Paul proposed to change the way Virginia conducts

the training. Glenn Spangler, John DeYoung, and Paul will continue to prepare the training session slides in advance. The presentation will be made to all District Commissioners at the 2022 State Spring Meeting. The slides will be shared ahead of the meeting and all Commissioners will be expected to be aware of the contents prior to the meeting. The meeting presentation will be more of a discussion and Q&A session rather than a review of the slides. Each District Commissioner will then be required to schedule a meeting with their host league(s) President(s) and tournament directors(s) and review the slides more thoroughly. This model was used very effectively in District 7 this past season and is a better use of everyone's time. Phil Larcomb recommended that the State banners, trophies, and patches be handed out to the District Commissioners at the State Spring Meeting. Paul will place the order for the banners and Ken Bosserman will place the order for the other awards.

World Series invitations and impact on District and State tournaments: Since 2018, the 9-Year-olds Regional Champions have been invited to the following year's 10-Year-olds World Series and the 11-Year-olds Regional Champions have been invited to the following year's Major70 World Series. This past season, the Major60 Regional Runner-up was invited to the Major60 World Series. These invitations have a major impact on District and State tournaments (participation and second-team entries). We had a major complaint about this at the State 10-Year-olds tournament this year. It was an anomaly owing to the fact that there were no tournaments held in 2020, but it was an issue all the same. The rule today is these invited teams may play in their District and State tournaments, but not in the Regionals. Paul will be discussing the complaint at the upcoming Regional meeting.

2022 World Series in Virginia: John DeYoung reported that Virginia will host two Babe Ruth World Series in 2022: 13-Year-olds (Glen Allen, starting August 10) and 13–15-Year-olds (Stafford, starting August 11).

2022 Regional tournaments in Virginia: John DeYoung reported that Virginia will host four Southeast Regional tournaments in 2022: Rookies (New Kent, starting July 12), 12-Year-olds 70' (Glen Allen, starting July 12), 13–15-Year-olds (Williamsburg, starting July 19), and 16–18-Year-olds (Williamsburg, starting July 12).

2022 softball tournament status: Paul did not have anything to report.

Softball tournament rules summary change: Matt Clark brought up the rules regarding time limits for 10U to 18U softball tournament games. Reference Rule 11:05 Special Rules and Regulations on page 53 (will be added to our rules summary), Paragraph 15: Time limits for games shall be no new inning may start after 1 hour and 30 minutes of play. EXCEPTION: Championship Games
Impact: Straight pool brackets (three-, four-, five, or six-team straight pool brackets) where there are no divisions and hence no single-elimination round. Standings are determined by winning percentage with tie games included.

State Policy 1004 proposed revision (drawing tournament brackets): John DeYoung asked that the Board agree to changing the first sentence of State Policy 1004 from "Brackets will be drawn no sooner than 3 weeks before the start of each State tournament." to "Brackets will be drawn when all participating Districts are known, but no sooner than 3 weeks before the start of each State tournament." This change, and the addition of a statement in the MTIP ("It is anticipated that the tournament will begin on or around [DAY], [DATE]. However, the exact date and time for team check-in will be 1 hour prior to a team's first game based on the information provided in the posted tournament bracket. Virginia Policy 1004 states, in part, 'Brackets will be drawn when all participating Districts are known,

but no sooner than 3 weeks before the start of each State tournament.”) will make it clearer that the start date for the State tournament may change based on the number of teams participating. **Agreement was unanimous.** [The change was posted on the State website on September 26, 2021.]

Buddy Ball plans for 2022: Don Gowen said that he had four leagues (Herndon, Williamsburg, Waynesboro, and Orange) that were interested in participating next season.

Potential new leagues for 2022:

- Portsmouth – District 1
- Amelia – District 2
- Goochland – District 3

VBRUA compensation schedule for 2022: The group voted to keep the umpire fees at the current rates. Donny Rose brought up discussion regarding adding back a third umpire for games on 70’ and 90’ fields. The reason for this was the enforcement of the balk rule. Donny mentioned that to keep costs down, that the three umpires would split the cost three ways. For example, the league would schedule three umpires for a game but only pay for two. There was a lot of discussion amongst the group about the need for a third umpire and if you start a tournament with two umpires why change up the tournament of having three in the semifinal and final games. Discussion was tabled until the spring meeting.

Review of grant applications: John DeYoung reported that three applications were received by the September 1 deadline. Some of the applications did not include the requested supporting information. When that information is received, the applications will be reviewed by the State Executive Committee, who will vote on each application.

Babe Ruth Alumni Association donation: Paul mentioned that the Southeast Regional Commissioner would like for each State to donate at a minimum of \$100 per year to the Babe Ruth Alumni Association. Several members felt that Virginia has already met this requirement by making donations in memory of former Virginia Babe Ruth volunteers who have passed away. No action was required.

Washington Nationals 2021 Champions Day update: Paul said the attendees were Williamsburg (10-Year-olds) and Rockville (10U). The Nationals held their Champions Day on a school night—in the past it was held during a weekend game. Paul chalked it up to COVID and the Nationals schedule, but he will mention his concern to the Nationals about reverting to a weekend night and not a school night.

General discussion:

Discussion revolved around the need to know at which age groups teams will be invited to Regional tournaments and the need for this information before State tournaments start. The issue is the impact on pitching strategy as the tournaments progress.

There was discussion on the softball definition of where outfielders stand based on different field dimensions of grass cutouts. The group felt this was a non-issue.

There was discussion centered on the five-run limitation per inning and the time limit per game and the resulting impact of tie games on pool-play standings.

It was discussed that softball teams can play with 9 players (although 10 are allowed) and that an additional out is not recorded if there are only 9 players in the lineup.

The final discussion centered on the inconsistent wordings used to define the 15-Run Rule.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Prepared by Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer