



# BABE RUTH NETWORK

Home of Babe Ruth Baseball,  
Softball and Cal Ripken Leagues



## *Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.*

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### MINUTES

September 28, 2008

Dorey Park Recreation Building

7200 Dorey Park Drive

Varina, Virginia

#### **In Attendance**

Don Rose, State Commissioner

John DeYoung, Asst State Comm./Baseball Opns

Dave Gushee, Sec/Treasurer

John Armentrout, Asst State Comm./Compliance

Brandon Currence, Dist. I Baseball Comm.

Chris McCook, Lakeside Baseball

Gayle Clary, Dist. II Asst. Baseball Comm.

Roy Brewer, District V Commissioner

Dave Cogar, Manassas Baseball

Rich Trala, Bethlehem Softball

Bruce Frye, Softball Consultant

Roy Brewer, Dist. V Baseball/Dist. III Softball Comm.

Don Gowen, Asst State Comm./Softball Opns

Tommy Clary, District II Baseball Comm.

Paul Link, Dist. VII Baseball Comm.

Nancy Currence, Dist. I Asst. Baseball Comm.

Cliff Stewart, Varina Baseball/Softball

Todd Stebbing, District III Commissioner

Phil Larcomb, District IX Commissioner

Kenny Loveless, Manassas Baseball

Don Rose, Jr., Umpire Consultant

Curtis Moore, Dist. I Asst Softball Comm.

#### Special Guests:

Henry Sermons, Southeast Region Comm.

Rob Connor, Babe Ruth 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, \$2989.47 in the checking account (compared with \$3,511.18 in 2007) and \$20,186.65 in mutual funds (compared to \$21,805.82 in 2007), plus a loan against the mutual funds of \$3,019.52. Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia will incur an operating loss for the year of over \$3,000; \$3,000 was borrowed from the reserves in order to maintain a checking account balance. There was an equivalent operating deficit in 2007, but enough contributions in cash were received to cover the loss.

Stan Blankenship, representing J. Rich Associates, made a presentation of his firm's fund-raising operations, consisting primarily of producing and selling team and player photos, plus 3-pound boxes of Vidalia onions. He reported that the onions are an unusual sales offering; they fit the

baseball season in that they are harvested in May and can be provided to the parents before they reach the grocery stores through normal distribution channels.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

The position of Assistant State Commissioner, Softball Operations, has been vacant for most of the year. Don Gowen was nominated. He was elected by acclamation.

### **State Tournaments**

#### **BASEBALL**

John DeYoung reported that the State Tournaments went off well overall. One of the most favorable developments was the fact that most Tournament Directors (or their surrogates) reported tournament scores daily to John DeYoung, who forwarded them to John Armentrout, who posted them on the State Web page daily. A few problems arose, as usual – parent behavior in a few cases, teams dropping out at the last minute, and some questions about the Parent Gate Fee.

#### **SOFTBALL**

Don Rose reported that most went well. One team at one tournament forfeited a game because they put 17 players on the tournament roster. This caused a brouhaha, but the forfeit stood.

#### **T-BALL**

Don Rose reported that Greene County hosted the T-Ball Get-Together. Nine teams participated. Don observed that it was amazing how the players, despite their youth, knew what to do with the ball when it came to them, even though they often were not able to do it.

#### **BUDDY BALL**

The event this year was held in Waynesboro. Participants included some blind kids, kids in wheelchairs, and other disabilities. Everyone had a fine time, Don reported. He also commented on the Waynesboro facility. The dugout will hold 18 wheelchair participants.

### **Regional Tournaments**

Virginia hosted three Regionals in 2008. The Cal Ripken 9s was hosted by Stafford. Vienna hosted the 16s. One major problem was last-minute changes in which teams would participate. Another problem was that some teams had 14-year-old players on their rosters. This is in violation of Babe Ruth rules. And a third problem was that Vienna ended up unable to field a host team because they didn't have enough players. Vienna did an exceptional job of enlisting support from other local Babe Ruth leagues and from other sports groups in the Vienna area to carry out the host volunteer duties. South Hill hosted the 16-18 tournament, using two fields.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Rob Connor's Remarks**

Headquarters has been busy modernizing headquarters operations. His major points:

Baseball and softball have been merged in all the Regions under the leadership of the Regional Commissioner, who will have the option of appointing assistants for the Ripken Division, the 13-18 Division, and the Softball Division.

New logos have been designed for the various operations. They will appear in the near future. Current patches will be acceptable as long as they last.

The Charter process will go on line. The goal is to have all Charters filed electronically eventually, although the paper option will continue for a while. State Commissioners will be able to review each application and, if something appears to be awry, block it before it enters the headquarters system, based on State standards. Payment can be made on-line. The system will permit each league to create on line its players list, league team rosters, and tournament team rosters, and prepare player ID cards (which will be produced by headquarters and sent to the leagues).

State and District officials will have access to the national database. League officials will have access to their individual league databases.

Babe Ruth League, Inc. is in process of setting up a Web-based TV system, initially for World Series games and from there to expand into other tournament levels and eventually to individual leagues.

### **Henry Sermons' Remarks**

Henry expressed his appreciation for the Virginia baseball/softball operations. If all the States in his Region were as effective, he would get a lot more sleep.

Aside from the reorganization of administrative functions at the Regional level, Henry reported that softball Regional tournaments would no longer all be held at one site. Few leagues have enough facilities to handle six tournaments at once; this change will allow for more leagues to have the opportunity to host Regional tournaments.

### **New District and League**

A league in the far southwest of the State has decided to charter with Babe Ruth. To accommodate this league (Southwest Virginia Babe Ruth League, Big Stone Gap, Virginia), District X will be activated. Don Rose reported that the new league already has signed up 150 players. League President is Robert Duncan. The league will have both baseball and softball.

## **Policy Changes**

Based on recent experiences, both good and not so good, a number of policy changes were proposed for Board consideration.

The new District X is more than 100 miles from the nearest boundary of the farthest district to which and from which State tournament teams must travel. State policy has been that leagues playing in State tournaments whose district boundaries are 100 miles or less from the nearest boundary of the host league need not be housed. It was MOVED, SECONDED, and VOTED that this policy be changed to read “less than 300 miles.”

Other policies proposed for the 2009 Season were discussed:

- Districts must report the number of teams that will participate in each State tournament not later than May 15, 2009. District and State plaques will be ordered not later than May 22, 2009. (The lead time for delivery of the plaques is 3 to 4 weeks after the order.)
- Brackets will be drawn 2 weeks before the start of each State tournament. No teams can be added or dropped after brackets have been drawn. If a District does not provide a representative or if a team fails to participate, that team will be considered to have forfeited their first round and elimination round games in the tournament. (Brackets will not be redrawn.)
- The host league at a State Tournament shall have the authority to choose between charging admission fees at the gate (Option #1) or participating in the Gate Pass Program (Option #2), but cannot use both options.
- In situations where a league is made up of two or more “Associations”, the league will be required to insure all the teams through K&K irrespective of the individual insurance requirements of each of the “Associations”.
- Babe Ruth Rule 11.02 (both baseball and softball) sets the allowable range for number of players on tournament teams and that waivers are not allowed. No State, District, or League official is authorized to waive published Babe Ruth rules or establish policies or rules that are in conflict with those published Babe Ruth rules and policies.

After the discussion, it was MOVED, SECONDED, and VOTED to approve these policies.

## **Swing Players**

Several District Commissioners have been reporting difficulties in maintaining participation in their leagues by the better ball players in their Districts. Traveling teams have been luring them away. Further, in those leagues where players beyond those playing for their school teams participate, those players either make up tournament teams not truly competitive against leagues which have retained their better players, or don't get appointed to tournament teams and thus have no competitive trail beyond their league games. In partial response to this problem, the Board decided to institute State Tournaments beyond those of the Babe Ruth League itself and to tentatively call them Alliance Tournaments. Any league can enter an Alliance team at the State

level without the necessity of going through a District Tournament. The approved 2009 budget includes this initiative.

Further, in some Districts, players under 15 are playing high school ball but, under current national rules, are ineligible to play in the Babe Ruth system with their older school teammates. This gives high school coaches added leverage against Babe Ruth participation when they want their players to play non-school ball as teams. Several suggestions evolved out of the discussion and it was resolved to pass on to Babe Ruth League a recommendation that three new options be considered:

The 13-15 Division and the 16-18 Division be combined into a 13-18 Division and that leagues be free to organize their teams in any age distribution they find helpful.

The softball designation of 18U, 16U, and 14U be adopted for baseball, with it being understood that 18U would permit players 13-18, 16U would permit players 13-16, and 14U would permit players 13 or 14.

Or

The current 15-year-old swing player rule be modified to include 14-year-olds as well.

### **The 2009 Budget**

The agenda for this meeting included a number of proposed budget policy changes, which were described in more detail in an attachment sent separately prior to the meeting. The attachment is also attached to these minutes. In sum, the current policies not only have provided insufficient revenue to cover the administrative costs of the State officials but also have not covered actual expenses. In 2007, cash flow was approximately in balance because State officials contributed more than \$15,000 in authorized costs they incurred. Some \$3500 in cash was also contributed. This year, although not all expenses have been submitted, they appear to be about the same as in 2007, but the \$3500 in cash has not been forthcoming. Thus, the operating deficit this year will be about \$3500, give or take a few hundred dollars.

It was proposed that the travel assistance grants to State Tournament winners (and in the case of softball, runners-up) be discontinued and that the State Tournament hosts be assessed a Host Fee of from \$350 to \$650, depending on the number of participants in the tournaments (Currently, Host Leagues have been assessed \$250 per tournament (\$500 for softball), which was matched by the State and used to pay the winners' travel assistance grants). State dues and assessments would not be changed.

During the discussion that ensued, it was decided that, since much of the State's cost burden was related to administration of affairs other than tournaments, the players should put up part of the necessary money and the Tournament Hosts the other part. After trying a number of combinations, it was MOVED, SECONDED, and VOTED to increase the player assessment by

\$3.00 and set the Tournament Host Fee at \$350 for all State tournaments. The resulting budget numbers are attached to these minutes.

With this budget, expected State administrative expenses will be covered, and the State will be able to reimburse its officials for the costs they incur in carrying out their duties.

### **The 2009 Tournament Trail**

Based on current rotation policy, the distribution of State Tournaments in 2009 will be:

#### Baseball

District I	11/60 Ripken
District II	14s
District III	12/60 Ripken
District IV	13s
District V	11/70 Ripken and 16-18s
District VI	13-15s
District VII	10s Ripken and 16s
District VIII	8s and 12/70 Ripken
District IX	9s Ripken
District X	None

Alliance Tournaments TBD

Softball Districts VIII and IX would have three each.

The Tournament Rotation chart is on the State Web site.

The State is scheduled to host the Regional 10s Ripken Tournament.

### **Golf Tournament to Create Tournament Grant Fund**

Paul Link has offered to set up a golf tournament, the proceeds from which will be used to establish a fund from which to provide support to leagues in the State unable to pay the Host Fee established for 2009 et seq (see budget ).

### **Training and Compliance -- Administration**

John Armentrout reported that he will need league boundaries in Word format starting in 2009.

John reported that the training provided in 2008 was helpful for those who participated. He is seeking other Districts to host the training session in 2009.

### **Virginia Babe Ruth Umpires**

Don Rose reported that the Virginia Babe Ruth Umpires Association will be established effective 2009. John Armentrout will create a registration form. Umpires signing up will agree to a fee structure as follows: Cal Ripken Baseball 60' Program (Rookies through 12s) = \$40.00 per umpire per game; Cal Ripken Baseball 70' Program (11s and 12s) and the Babe Ruth 13-15 Division = \$45.00 per umpire per game; Babe Ruth Baseball 16-18 Division = \$50.00 per umpire per game; Babe Ruth Softball 12U Division = \$40.00 per umpire per game; Babe Ruth Softball 16U Division = \$45.00 per umpire per game; and Babe Ruth Softball 18U Division = \$50.00 per umpire per game. This will make budgeting for State Tournament Hosts much more reliable. Members will umpire State Tournaments. Only umpires in this association will be recommended for assignment to Regional and World Series Tournaments.

### **16s Tournament Trail**

Given the limited number of teams throughout the State and their uneven distribution among the Districts, it was agreed that there would be no 16s District Tournaments in 2009, that the State Tournament would be an Invitational, and that any team that meets Babe Ruth eligibility requirements can participate.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

### **Parents Gate Pass Program and State Host Contracts**

Since the meeting, the 2009 Parents Gate Pass Program Calculators (seven – based on the cost of baseballs/softballs and the umpire maximum fees) have been updated using the Board-approved cost data, and the 2009 State Host Contracts are in review and will be completed before the end of October. All will be posted on the State Web site.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer

Attachments: Approved 2009 Budget Details  
Minutes, Executive Board Meeting 8/16/08  
Minutes, Policy Meeting 9/13/08