



# BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

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



## Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

### MINUTES

October 9, 2011

**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.  
Rick Bill, District 8 Softball Commissioner  
Roy Brewer, District 5 Commissioner  
Jeremy Benfield, Sandston Babe Ruth League  
Wyn Francis, Herndon Cal Ripken League

John DeYoung, Asst State Comm. /Baseball Opns  
Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer  
John Armentrout, Asst State Comm. /Compliance  
Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner  
Bruce Frye, Assistant Softball UIC, South  
Phil Larcomb, District 9 Commissioner  
Glenn Spangler, District 4 Softball Comm.  
Kenny Loveless, District 8 Softball Commissioner  
George Burke, Northern Umpire Consultant  
Jackie Hardman, Sandston Babe Ruth League  
Jingle Hylton, Sandston Babe Ruth League  
Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief

Don Rose, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:57 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 10/1, \$15,134.48 in the checking account (compared with \$19,368.91 in 2010) and \$31,263.52 in mutual funds (compared to \$22,712.51 in 2010). 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. Investment income for the year to date is \$530.32, reflective of the very low current rates of return generally being experienced.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **State Tournaments**

#### **BASEBALL**

John DeYoung began by thanking all the volunteers, including those present, for their contributions to the running of the tournaments. He identified several issues: unexpected withdrawal of teams shortly before, during, or after tournaments; sportsmanship (a few cases); incorrect tournament balls (one host inadvertently ordered T-Ball balls, misled by the unclear designation (they had several of the correct letters but also had other letters whose purpose was not clear when the order was placed); and some bat controversies (resolved without serious controversy).

Overall, though, with the exception of the extreme heat during some of the tournaments, things went very well. The heat led to a number of cases of heat exhaustion, trips to hospitals, and rescheduling of games from afternoons to mornings and evenings.

#### **SOFTBALL**

Don Gowen reported that most went well. He also reported problems associated with the extreme heat and some rain issues, the latter not at all unusual with such tightly-scheduled games. The tournaments were split between the northern part of the State and the southern (Varina). Some folks complained that one site did not have lights; the Board shrugged that off; that's the way it is, live with it, was the consensus.

### **Regional Tournaments**

Virginia hosted two baseball and three softball Regionals in 2011.

The Babe Ruth 13s Regional was hosted by Stafford. John DeYoung reported that Robert Dreistadt and his volunteers organized it well, using two high school fields. There were some misbehaving parents and coaches, eventually ejected from the field by the umpires. They refused to leave; the umpires didn't force the issue. It was agreed during the discussion that the ump should have stopped the game, told the ejected people to leave immediately or the game would be forfeited. The baseball games were very good, fortunately.

The 16-18 Regional was plagued by problems, Tommy Clary reported. In addition to the heat, the tournament wasn't well organized. One injured player, who was sent to the hospital, had no Consent for Treatment form. Some of the ump's wouldn't report to the scorekeepers player changes reported to them, so the official scorekeepers did not know what was going on when it seemed ineligible batters went to the plate. Tommy added, though, that he eventually did get most everything straight. The last three games were really well-played, competitive, and with good behavior.

Don Gowen reported no significant problems other than the heat with the 8U, 14U, and 16U Regionals hosted by Varina. The heat was so bad that several kids and umps passed out and were hospitalized. All recovered quickly, fortunately. Because of the heat, a number of the afternoon games were rescheduled to 8 and 10 am and 6 and 8 pm.

### **World Series**

The 10s Cal Ripken World Series was held in Winchester. Phil Larcomb reported that it was “a textbook series,” beautifully organized, strongly supported by local governments and businesses, with both financial grants and volunteer support. Attendance was high—up to 3-4,000 per game, and enthusiastic. The Winchester team was undefeated in pool play and ended up in the final, losing 5-4 in a close, tense game. Nick Biddison, whose Glen Allen team finished 1- 3 in pool play, hit five home runs, a World Series record, three of them in Glen Allen’s final game, also a record.

Glen Allen hosted the 14s World Series. Everything went well, including the Glen Allen team, which also ended up in the championship game but, as with Winchester, lost in a close game. Beaverton, OR, scored twice in the top of the seventh to break a 3-3 tie for a 5-3 win. According to Todd Stebbing, the experience was so good that the Glen Allen Board is initiating a request to hold another one in 4 years. Glen Allen hosted a World Series 3 years ago, and concluded that a 4-year gap would be preferable, due to both the planning required and the workload on the organizers.

### **Update on VRPS Exhibition**

Don Gowen and John DeYoung reported that BRL of Va had a booth at the annual conference of the Virginia Recreation and Park Society, held in Norfolk in mid-September. 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 BRL of Va. Participating in the show has not yet led to any new leagues that we can tell, but once again, there were several expressions of interest that might lead to new leagues. Oh, well, “hope springs eternal ...” Next year’s show will be in Wintergreen Resort, with Nelson County Parks and Rec as the hosts.

### **Open Discussion on the 2011 Season**

Don Rose pointed out that many State Champion teams did well in their Regional tournaments, others not so well. Lots of kids had a good time.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Election of Officers**

The Nominating Committee of Phil Larcomb and Roy Brewer put forth the following slate:

State Commissioner:	Don Rose
Assistant State Commissioner, Baseball Operations:	John DeYoung
Assistant State Commissioner, Softball Operations:	Don Gowen
Secretary/Treasurer:	Dave Gushee
Assistant State Commissioner, Training and Compliance:	No nominee

Phil Larcomb spoke to the slate, pointing out first that the incumbents other than John Armentrout have expressed a willingness to continue, if elected, and second, that John Armentrout chose not to run, as he has been appointed to an equivalent position (Training and Compliance) for the Southeast Region. John pointed out that as a Regional Official, he would be available to the State for both training and compliance needs and issue resolution (if any), so it was not clear to him that the position would still be necessary.

A lively discussion ensued, the outcome of which was that, since there was uncertainty about how the vacant position's role would evolve, no one should be elected. Further discussion showed that training programs would still need a coordinator, even though perhaps Armentrout could handle the compliance activities. Rick Bill volunteered to act as an interim Training Coordinator.

It was MOVED and seconded to elect the four named nominees, to appoint Rick Bill as an interim Training Coordinator until the Spring 2012 meeting, to place a review of the position on the Spring agenda, and, since the Bylaws name the Assistant State Commissioner for Training and Compliance as Acting State Commissioner should the State Commissioner be unavailable or incapacitated, to name the Assistant State Commissioners for Baseball Operations and Softball Operations as co-Acting State Commissioners should the State Commissioner be unavailable or incapacitated. The motion passed unanimously.

### **2012 Budget**

Dave Gushee pointed out that 2011 is the third year of operation under current budgeting policies. Although the third year is not yet complete, it appears that the 2011 outcome will be a repeat of the two previous years in which operating revenue exceeded operating expenses by about one dollar per chartered team. Gushee asked whether the Board would wish to reduce the fee per team by \$1.00 to \$5.00 per team (plus dues of \$5.00 per team for a total of \$10.00 per team compared to the current level of \$11.00) or would prefer to leave the current fee in place. Don Rose pointed out that because the number of State-certified umpires serving in Regional tournaments is increasing and hopefully will continue to do so and accordingly the costs of supporting their travel to the Regional Tournaments is rising, he would recommend that the fee remain at \$6.00. The ensuing discussion led to an explicit consensus that the fee should not be changed, so it was MOVED and seconded that the 2012 budget continue current budget policies and priorities, including that the existing dues/fee structure be retained for 2012. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Southeast Region Hall of Fame**

Ken Bosserman of Staunton has been selected for membership. His induction will take place at the Southeast Regional meeting next week in South Carolina.

## **Team Certification**

This issue stems from the fact that each year some teams enter the tournament trail and drop out, either during a tournament or after winning at the District or State level. It happened a couple of times this year. This subject has been discussed at earlier State meetings. No consensus has developed on how to respond to the issue. Several alternative suggestions have been 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, or that the State hold back the League’s Letter(s) of Eligibility the next year. These suggestions got a mixed review this year, as they have in the past. No decisions were made, other than that the issue be discussed again at the Spring meeting.

## **1004 Policy**

This recently adopted policy states that once the State tournament brackets have been drawn (some 2 weeks before the tournament start date), when a team expecting to participate drops out, its games will be forfeited but the bracket remains unchanged. State officials are authorized to redraw the brackets within that last 2-week period if, in their collective judgment, equity would be better served.

The issue discussed was whether the 2-week period was too short in some cases, such as, for example, difficulty in finding umpires. After discussion, it was MOVED and seconded to increase the period from 2 to 3 weeks. The motion passed with one nay vote.

## **Realignment of Districts 6 and 7 into District 13**

This realignment took place effective for the 2011 season. The realignment provides 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. Paul Link reported that the new District 13 worked well; the leagues cooperated, and interleague schedules led to increased competition and no problems. An unexpected side benefit was that Fairfax County, seeing a larger combined Babe Ruth operation, became more generous in field allocations. It was agreed to continue the pilot realignment for the 2012 season, with two District Commissioners and sending two teams forward to State Tournaments.

## **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, either last

Fall or this past Spring. Don Rose suggested for discussion that District 4 be divided into two districts and, like the new District 13, send two teams forward to State Tournaments. Ken Bosserman pointed out some of the difficulties that such an approach would create, in that, for example, some leagues aren't large enough to put forward tournament teams at all age levels. No obvious advantages to any way of moving things around seemed better than the current situation. No action was taken.

### **Determining Hosts for 2011 State Tournaments**

Don Rose reported that he continues to find it difficult administratively to extract signed contracts and tournament fee checks for many of the host leagues. No host fee invoices were sent to the host leagues. This year, contracts were sent to the District Commissioners expecting to host State tournaments. The District Commissioners pursued the decision process to completion and pressed the ultimate tournament host to cut the check and sign the contract well before tournament time. The process worked well enough that we will use it again in 2012. Dave Gushee suggested that he send host fee invoices to the host leagues to help league treasurers who are reluctant to write checks without invoices, with copies to the District Commissioners.

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 and passed around at the meeting). All agreed that they expected to be able to find the necessary host leagues. John reminded the District Commissioners to remind the host leagues to use the correct terminology for their tournaments. The tournaments are 8s, 9s, 10s, 11s, 12s, 13s, 14s, 13-15s, and 16-18s, no U's anywhere, unlike softball.

Don Gowen, on the other hand, reported that there was no agreed-upon rotation schedule for softball State Tournaments. He will work with the District Commissioners and softball leagues to develop hosts.

### **Format for 16-18 State Tournament**

After discussion of this year's tournament, it was agreed that this year's format would remain in place for next year.

### **VBRUA**

Donnie Rose Jr. reported that we have more certified umpires than ever before and more are being assigned to Regional Tournaments. He suggested that District Tournament hosts try to get State-certified umpires for District Tournaments, to maintain this progression of umps to higher tournament levels. Donny pointed out that, in some tournaments, the host leagues had troubles getting local State-certified umpires. Donny urged such hosts to follow the State guidelines – contact either him or the State regional umpires in chief when the problem becomes obvious; they will find State-certified umpires in other parts of the State to come in.

## **11-Team and 6-Team Tournament Brackets**

John DeYoung and Ken Bosserman respectively have identified problems with games 15 and 16 in the 11-team bracket and games 4 and 5 in the 6-team bracket. In the 11-team bracket, unless game 16 was played before game 15, the loser of game 14 would be playing back-to-back games while the loser of game 13 would get a two-game break before playing game 16. At John's request, headquarters has agreed with John's definition of the issue, has changed the on-line bracket to reverse the previous games 15 and 16, and has posted the revised bracket as the new official one. In the official 6-team bracket, the game between L-1 and L-4 is game 6, while the game between L-2 and L-3 is game 5. To reverse the order would mean that all teams get at least a one-game recovery period between their first game and their first elimination game. Headquarters has agreed with this change also and has changed the official Web versions (PDF and XLS versions). Kudos to all involved in handling these issues so expeditiously and cooperatively.

## **One-Team Leagues**

Don Rose reports that he will not charter one-team leagues next year, instead steering the applicants to the nearest alternative leagues. This will not apply to either 16-18 baseball teams or 18U softball leagues.

## **Parents Gate Pass Calculations**

Some costs in this calculation will change from last year. The new formula will be finalized at the Spring meeting.

## **Possible National Softball Policy Changes Under Preliminary Consideration**

Don Gowen attended a meeting in Indianapolis in September, the purpose of which was to stimulate greater participation throughout the age brackets, including adding more World Series, eliminating host family requirements, and getting more teams into the World Series. The World Series thought is to invite up to 20 teams to the World Series and to add World Series at the 10U and 14U levels. The changes would take effect for the 2013 season. These ideas are in the early stages of consideration; there is as of now no consensus.

## **Next Spring Meeting**

It was MOVED, seconded, and passed unanimously that the next Spring meeting be held in Warrenton.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 pm.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer