



BABE RUTH LEAGUE, INC.

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



Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.

MINUTES

October 9, 2016

**Dorey Park Recreation Building, Henricus Room
7200 Dorey Park Drive
Henrico, Virginia**

In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner	John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm. /Baseball Opns.
Don Gowen, Asst. State Comm. /Softball Opns.	Dave Gushee, Secretary/Treasurer
Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner	Tommy Clary, District 2 Commissioner
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm.	Glenn Spangler, District 4 Softball Comm.
Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Commissioner	Phil Larcomb, Asst. State Comm. /Training
Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief	Bruce Frye, South/Central Softball Consultant
Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Commissioner	Keith Beagle, Varina Youth Sports
Hunter "Mac" Pultz, South Umpire Asst.	John Armentrout, SE Region Asst. Comm.
Topper Phelps, District 3 Asst. Commissioner	John Kemper, District 9 Commissioner
Lisa Kemper, District 9 Asst. Commissioner	Dan Schmitt, Glen Allen Babe Ruth League

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:50 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 September 30, 2016, \$7474.06 in the checking account (compared with \$5085.65 in 2015) and \$76,385.17 in mutual funds (compared to \$74,446.20 in 2015). A number of expected expenses, including State Officer expenses, have not yet been submitted, but from informal estimates of those expenses, it looks like income for the year will fall short of expenses, primarily as a result of the costs of our participation in the Washington Nationals Champions Day. This slight (compared to gross revenue) excess of expenses over revenue was budgeted for and will be made up from investment income, as planned.

Special Honor Accorded to our Secretary-Treasurer

Paul Link announced, prior to dealing with the agenda items, that Dave Gushee, long-time Secretary-Treasurer for Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, has been recognized by the Babe Ruth Southeast Region by inducting him into the Southeast Region Hall of Fame. John Armentrout, Southeast Region Assistant Commissioner, presented Dave with a plaque; Paul Link read off a review of Dave's contributions to Babe Ruth from the letters of recommendation which supported his nomination. This must be an important honor, Dave commented later, because the plaque was so heavy that he asked Phil Larcomb to carry it to the car for the trip home.

OLD BUSINESS

New Leagues in the 2016 Season

Glenn Spangler reported that six new softball leagues joined us for the season. It appears that they enjoyed the experience, as all have told him that they expect to sign up again for 2017.

Tommy Clary reported that he was able to get several new leagues from small-population communities in his district. It was a struggle, as the players, all in the high school age range, had options to play travel ball outside the Babe Ruth system. He thinks that two of the new leagues will come back next year but is not sure.

State Tournaments

TRAINING FOR TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

In June, Phil Larcomb, Assistant State Commissioner for Training and Compliance, held the third 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 in previous years, 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 is now 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. He cited three problems worth mentioning. First, some Districts had problems finalizing tournament details and keeping them finalized. Field locations for three tournaments were changed after having been posted on the State Web page. Teams not showing up for play and thus causing forfeit situations in the brackets required in several cases that the pairings be redrawn late in the process (in accordance with State Policy #1004), because forfeits

create real problems of equity. One tournament director had named the umpire-in-chief as the entire Protest Committee, in direct contradiction of tournament requirements (Rule 11.05, paragraph 10), even though the matter had been discussed at the Tournament Director Training Workshop. And the Don Rose Memorial Sportsmanship Award was originally given, in one tournament, to the head groundskeeper instead of to a team. Most of these missteps were corrected (the sportsmanship award is still listed as “tba” on the State Web site), but they demonstrate the importance of the Tournament Director Training Workshops. Before those, such discrepancies were a lot more common.

SOFTBALL

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

Don Gowen reported that most went well. There were some scheduling issues caused by rain and some umpire performance problems. Varina was the host league. All leagues were invited to participate. Even so, participation was less than had been hoped for at a couple of age levels.

Don suggested that the umpire performance issues might be eased if the tournament umpires-in-chief had a training workshop similar to that given to the tournament directors. That suggestion met with general approval and will be taken up for official action at the Spring meeting.

Regional Tournaments

Virginia hosted four baseball Regional Tournaments in 2016—the Cal Ripken 11-Year-olds 70-foot at Williamsburg, the 12-Year-olds 60-foot and 12-Year-olds 70-foot at Glen Allen, and the Babe Ruth 14-Year-olds in Colonial Heights. All went well, with excellent weather. John DeYoung reported that, when checking in teams for the 14-Year-olds tournament, he noted three Babe Ruth ID cards for one team on which the birthdates, although all within the specified age range, did not match the birthdates on the tournament team rosters. He suggested that District Commissioners, when they review tournament team credentials book, take care to see if such errors are there. They are not the players’ fault, but should be corrected early on the tournament trail.

Virginia hosted all five Regional softball tournaments. Varina was the host league. Shenandoah Rec won the 12U Regional tournament.

Regional tournament results are posted on the Southeast Region Web site.

World Series

Virginia hosted no World Series in 2015. Shenandoah Rec won the 12U Softball World Series and Glen Allen won the 10-Year-olds Baseball World Series—both teams were undefeated through all levels of tournament trail play!

Champions Day at Washington Nationals

This was the third year that the Washington Nationals hosted State 12-Year-olds championship teams at one of its games. Our winners—Shenandoah Rec (which also won its Regional tournament and its World Series), Arlington (the 12-Year-olds 70-foot State champion), and Gloucester (the 12-Year-olds 60-foot State champion)—were recognized on the field before the game. In fact, Shenandoah Rec, as the World Series champion, was given special recognition by receiving a standing ovation from 22,000 fans in the park at the time of the ceremony and was also on the field with the Nationals players during the playing of the Star Spangled Banner.

Review of State Dues Invoicing Policy Change

At the Spring 2016 State meeting, the Board voted to change the dues invoicing and payment process. The move was made to ease the crunch experienced in late May and most of June each year as the State Commissioner, the Secretary-Treasurer, all the District Commissioners, and a major percentage of the leagues struggled to settle on their final numbers of rosters and match their dues payments thereto. Starting this season, each league would be billed for the number of teams they had rostered the previous year, regardless of how many teams they might end up with this year. Payment of that invoice would satisfy the dues paid requirement in order for the leagues to be eligible for their Letters of Eligibility (LOEs) for tournament play. Differences between the numbers of teams finally ended up with and the numbers paid for would be dealt with by a debit or credit on next year's invoice, on which they would be billed for this year's numbers of teams rostered.

The first half of this process worked well this year. There was a bit of a hassle in June from the fact that a number of leagues, particularly in the older age brackets, chartered late. Since it did not matter how much they paid, as long as they paid something, most of the LOEs were released “with all deliberate speed.”

In preparation for next year's billing cycle, Dave Gushee, the Treasurer, in July extracted from the national database the numbers of rosters posted for each league and created his own database of this year's data compared to this year's payments. This was not as simple as it sounds, since some leagues' rosters did not show up on the national database even in July. Searches for the missing data in August by the Treasurer in August showed that some rosters had disappeared, some of those missing earlier did show up, and some roster counts changed. But Dave was able to get numbers for every team, which will be used in preparation of next year's invoices.

Paul Link went onto the database later than Dave, and found a dismayingly large number of rosters had disappeared and so he could not verify his team counts. This creates some uncertainties in our numbers. Paul has queried headquarters to address this issue. There has been no clarifying response yet.

In summary, this year's experience shows that the State Commissioner's burdens have been eased, but the Treasurer's burdens have been increased, the latter because of the time required to generate the database from which next year's invoices will be derived. If the leagues question the

numbers on the invoices, those will have to be dealt with next year. So whether this change in invoice policy is a net benefit or not is not certain. Next year's experience will help clarify the situation.

Review State 16-18 Leagues Area Tournament Process

This process, first used in 2015, disregards the Districts in which the leagues are chartered. The State Commissioner puts all the 16-18 Year-olds teams in a pot and generates two-team Area tournament pairings. The winners of these best-two-out-of-three Area tournaments advance to the State tournament. At the moment, this leads to nine 2-team tournaments followed by a 10-team State tournament. Most of the leagues involved like the arrangement better than the District tournament approach. There has been an occasional complaint about which teams are paired, but that sort of "goes with the territory," so to speak. Some members present at the meeting, in essence giving it a vote of confidence, wondered whether the concept could be applied at other age levels. The thought remains alive, but no official action is contemplated at this time.

Review SI Play Roster Process and Issues

(Ian Rueckert of SI Play was not able to travel from New York to the Virginia State meeting owing to flight cancellations following Hurricane Matthew.) National Babe Ruth is committed to the SI Play system. It has some problems, such as the disappearance of rosters noted above and the problem of how to get data not introduced into SI Play by some leagues into the Babe Ruth data system, which is a subset of the SI Play database. Another problem is the interface between the system and the multitude of league officials who must now enter their player and team data into the system. It was agreed, after discussion, to ask Babe Ruth or SI Play for a simple, easily downloadable, "how to" instruction manual.

Review Buddy Ball Appreciation Day

Don Gowen reported that this was held this year in Herndon. For those who participated, it was an enjoyable event. Since not all leagues with Buddy Ball teams charter them with Babe Ruth, Don says that he senses that there are more opportunities for participation than his current communications channels are generating. He will work on this for next year.

Open Discussion on 2016 Season

Ken Bosserman reported that he had heard that there are now entrepreneurs offering to doctor authorized bats (bat rolling) to increase the exit velocities of balls hit off them. He noted the case of a 10-year-old pitcher at one of his system's games who was hit in the chest by a batted ball traveling so fast that it caused great pain. Serious injury was not involved in this case, but Ken has heard reports of such injuries occurring with increasing frequency. No action was taken by the Board, but it was clear that the concern was of interest to the attendees.

Paul Link reported that Virginia's requirement that copies of the rosters of teams from which tournament players are selected must be placed in the tournament team credentials book is no

longer needed, since players not on team rosters cannot be placed on tournament teams unless they are already in the league's database and on a league team. It was VOTED unanimously to remove this requirement from the Tournament Team Checklist form posted in the Documents Download Center on the State Web site.

NEW BUSINESS

2017 Budget

Although the year is not yet complete, it appears that the 2016 outcome will be close to budget. Operating revenue will fall short of operating expenses by about \$1.00 per chartered team. Washington Nationals Champions Day, the Tournament Directors Training Workshop, and Umpire Training Clinics, all expanded in the past several years, account for the change from a slight excess of revenues over expenses to our current excess of expenses over revenue. Income from the reserves is more than sufficient to cover the difference.

Dave reminded the Board that the State reserves have increased significantly over the past 8 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.

Given this stable financial performance, the Board VOTED to continue the current budget policy.

Donation to Babe Ruth's Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund

Last year, Board discussed the current policy of donating \$500 each year to the Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund. Steven Tellefsen, Babe Ruth League, Inc. CEO, in response to our letter asking for some additional information about the uses to which the money in the Fund are put, provided an informative response which was included in the minutes of last Fall's State meeting. Thus, discussion at this meeting was brief and supportive of the contribution. It was VOTED to make the donation again this year.

Donation to the Don Rose Sr. Youth Scholarship Fund

Don Rose, Jr. reported that this scholarship fund, in the name of his father, for Loudoun County high school graduates who have been active in youth sports, was able to award six scholarships to students in six of the County's schools. Donny reported that response to the Fund's solicitations has been promising; its goal is eventually to be able to award scholarships to one student in each of the 17 high schools in the county. The Board members voted last year to donate to this Fund \$1,000 each year for 2 years and to reconsider the question next year. It was agreed to follow this policy.

Regional Meeting Notes

The Southeast Regional meeting was held last weekend in Myrtle Beach, SC. Paul Link reported that Virginia “is holding our own relative to other States” with respect to number of teams chartered, number of Babe Ruth-certified umpires, and number of umpires certified to umpire in Regional tournaments. The Region decided to increase the Parents Team Gate Pass Fee for teams participating in Regional Tournaments to \$500. A potential pitch-count rule for Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth Baseball was discussed; action on this is anticipated at the annual meeting of the International Board of Directors to be held in New Jersey later this month. Paul distributed a handout from the Regional meeting describing two options being considered for a pitch-count rule for tournament play in current baseball “age divisions” (age groups); according to the handout, “these tournament rules would completely replace the pitching restrictions and limitations used in local league play.”

ACTION: At the Regional meeting, Henry Sermons asked that District and State Commissioners assemble lists of those individuals who have volunteered for 25 years or more to Babe Ruth programs. Paul followed up on that at this State meeting, asking that all District Commissioners provide him, as soon as possible, a list of Babe Ruth volunteers in their District who have contributed 25 years or more of service to Babe Ruth Baseball and Softball programs.

Determining Hosts for 2017 State Tournaments

John DeYoung has revised the rotation schedule for hosting State baseball tournaments in 2017 through 2021 (posted in the Documents Download Center on the State Web page). As things stand at meeting time, the line-up for 2017 is as follows:

<u>Tournament</u>	<u>State Host</u>	<u>Regional Host</u>
Rookies	D9	Palm Beach Gardens, FL
9s	D1	Williamsburg, VA
10s	D5	Williamsburg, VA
11s60	No longer held	No Regional
11s70	D3	Longwood, FL
12s60	D8	Clemmons, NC
12s70	D7	Clemmons, NC
13s	D6	Ocala, FL
14s	D2	Ocala, FL
13-15s	D4	Greenville, NC
16-18s	D7	Stafford, VA

John DeYoung plans to send an email message to Baseball District Commissioners with updated information on 2017 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.

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. Last year, it was VOTED to accept Varina as host for the next 2 years (2016 and 2017) for all the softball State tournaments, with an option to extend thereafter. Varina hosted all the softball Regional tournaments in 2016. Keith Beagle, Varina President, reported that Varina may not be able to host the State tournament this year owing to the early dates of the State tournaments. He reported that his board may decide to skip the tournament trail in 2017. Keith will report back to Paul Link and Don Gowen after his board meets.

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.

Regional Tournaments in Virginia in 2017

There will be three baseball Regional Tournaments in Virginia next year: 9-Year-olds and 10-Year-olds in Williamsburg, and 16-18 Year-olds in Stafford. All five softball Regional Tournaments will be held in Stafford.

World Series in Virginia in 2017

Glen Allen will host the 14-Year-olds World Series in 2017. As a reminder, this means the Virginia State Champion gets an automatic berth in the World Series.

Dates for Regional and World Series Tournaments in 2017

The Southeast Region has posted on its Web site the Must-End Dates for State and Regional tournaments for 2017. Those tournaments will begin 2 weeks after the Must-End Date.

Little League Retreat from 17- and 18-year-old players

This action by Little League provides Babe Ruth Leagues with an opportunity to sign up the players disenfranchised by this decision for both Baseball and Softball (and quite possibly adding new leagues).

Tournament Directors Training

In response to the discussion earlier in the meeting, it was decided to add the tournament Umpires-in-Chief to the invitees to the Tournament Directors Training Workshop. Details remain to be worked out. The meeting next year is tentatively scheduled for the second weekend

in June 2017 in Stafford.

Selecting Umpires for State Tournaments

In our rural areas, many of our leagues must double up on resources to stay alive. This means that League Presidents are sometimes umpires and good ones at that. In an effort to have the best umpires at District and State tournaments, these same League Presidents are named UICs. Although this presents the potential for conflict, it is thought to be a necessary evil by the District Commissioners. It was decided that each UIC selection for State tournaments would be reviewed by the State UIC and the State Commissioner for approval. The umpire crew would then be selected by the UIC and the host League President and approved by the State UIC.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Prepared by Dave Gushee, Secretary-Treasurer