



Virginia Babe Ruth Baseball & Softball



MINUTES October 16, 2022 Central Library (Jefferson Room) 201 E. Market Street Charlottesville, Virginia

In Attendance

Paul Link, State Commissioner
Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer
John DeYoung, Asst. State Comm., Baseball Operations
Glenn Spangler, Asst. State Comm., Training
George Burke, State Umpire Advisor
Brandon Currence, District 1 Baseball Commissioner
Nancy Currence, District 1
Brian Eamigh, District 1 Asst. Baseball Commissioner

Tommy Clary, District 2 Baseball Commissioner
Gayle Clary, District 2 Asst. Baseball Commissioner
Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Commissioner
Ray Pitsenbarger, District 4 Asst. Baseball Commissioner
Pat O'Brien, District 6 Baseball Commissioner
Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner
Chris Frazier, District 10 Baseball Commissioner

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

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

Moment of silence: A moment of silence was requested for those Babe Ruth volunteers who passed away in the last year: Topper Phelps (District 3 Assistant Commissioner), Harold Six (Lynnhaven coach) and Natalie Loudan (Winchester Baseball – 2011 & 2014 10-Year-olds World Series executive committee member).

A motion was approved to make a \$300 memorial contribution to the Babe Ruth Alumni Association in memory of these three Babe Ruth volunteers.

Reading of the minutes: By unanimous vote, the reading of the minutes of the 2022 Spring Meeting was waived.

Treasurer's report: Phil Larcomb reported that the State treasury contained, as of October 16, 2022, \$1,364.30 in the checking account, Accounts Receivable \$6,500 (Wise \$5,000 and NFC \$1,500 loans) and \$52,540.07 in the mutual funds account for total cash and reserves of \$60,404.37. There were no liabilities.

Mutual funds account activity for Fiscal Year 2022: A one-time distribution of \$2,500.00 was taken from the mutual funds account on October 14, 2022. A David Gushee Memorial Grant for New Leagues of \$2,000 was awarded to Brunswick Babe Ruth. Also, an additional \$1,500 loan was granted to NFC Babe Ruth to be paid back within 2 years. A one-time distribution of \$5,000 was taken from the mutual funds account on July 22, 2022. Two World Series grants of \$1,000 were distributed to two Shenandoah

teams, 12-Year-olds Major60 Baseball and 12U Softball. During the fiscal year, eight grants in the amount of \$6,750.00 were awarded to Charlottesville, Cradock, Herndon-Reston (2), NEA, NFC, Northside, and RARO. Phil reminded the Board that the State reserves have decreased significantly over the past year, primarily because the stock market has lost almost 25% of its value. The reserves helped fund the negative cash flow for the period of November 2021 to the present.

OLD BUSINESS

2022 season review: Paul reported that he logged over 7,700 miles covering Babe Ruth events for the 2022 season that was both gratifying and disgusting. Paul's summary of the 2022 season was as follows:

- It was very gratifying that Virginia increased league team counts by 263 teams (a 22.4% gain) over 2021 aided by new leagues in Brunswick, Cradock, Fauquier, and Powhatan. Our 1440 teams put us higher than the 1318 team count in 2018 and the 1391 count in 2019. Thanks to the efforts of the Board and league volunteers, we exceeded our pre-pandemic counts. These numbers are based on 100% online rosters for the second year in a row, thanks again to everyone's efforts. Everyone here and at headquarters knows that is not an easy task.
- The year started with a 2-day visit to Wise with Glenn Spangler for a pre-tournament softball field inspection with a side excursion to the Flag Rock recreation area looking for Big Foot (also known as the Woodbooger). Paul was pleased to report they found him as witnessed by Doug Bates (District 11 Commissioner) and Caynor Smith (Wise Town Councilman).
- That was followed with another road trip with Glenn to Havelock, NC, to attend the funeral of Henry Sermons, Southeast Region Commissioner, 2002–2020. The funeral was well attended since Henry was an ex-EMS Driver, Fire Chief, and Fire Commissioner. The ringing of the bell and the "last call" were very moving experiences. A very sincere yet humorous eulogy was delivered by Jimmy Sanders, Eastern North Carolina State Commissioner.
- Moving on to a more local activity, a winter league meeting was held with Pat O'Brien and the Alexandria Senior Babe Ruth League Board of Directors.
- That was followed by Regional Tournament Director training in Stafford attended by John Lucas and John Armentrout and then a trip to Opening Day in Williamsburg.
- Next it was off to Greene County for a Buddy Ball event with Matt and Billie Clark (District 5 Commissioners), Donny Rose, and Don Gowen and then to Schneider Park in Stuarts Draft for the dedication of the park renovation.
- The State tournament season saw visits to Wise for 8U–16U Softball with Glenn Spangler and Bruce Frye and then to Rappahannock (10s) (which moved to Glen Allen owing to weather) with Curtis Moore, Powhatan (16-18s) again with Curtis Moore, and then Pulaski County (12s60) with Chris Frazier (only for those games to be rained out).
- Assistance was also given to Sheri Zimmerman at her District tournaments in late June at ballparks at Four Mile Run and Clermont.
- Virginia hosted five Regionals this past season (Rookie, 11s70, 12s70, 13-15s, and 16-18s). We were also scheduled to host the 12s60 Regional but that one was cancelled by the Regional Commissioner. Paul was the Regional representative for the Rookies, Dave Cogar was the Regional representative for the 11s70, and Glenn Spangler was the Regional representative for the 12s70. Paul and Glenn both supervised the 13-15s and 16-18s tournaments together. John Lucas, the Southeast Regional Commissioner, visited both the Rookie and 12s70 Regional tournaments.

- After the Regionals, Paul attended the final game of the 13-Year-olds World Series in Glen Allen and the final of the 13-15s World Series in Stafford.
- On August 30 and August 31, Paul and Phil Larcomb attended two Champions Day games at Nationals Park. Champions Day was expanded this year from just the 12-Year-olds to now include the 10-Year-olds and 11-Year-olds State Champions.
- Paul and Don Gowen then attended the Opening Day of the fall season for Buddy Ball in Williamsburg and celebrated with a pizza party and medal ceremony.
- Paul then discussed the disgusting part of his travels. All tournament related and all very serious. The entire coaching staff of a 16-18s team was ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct in the handshake line of the 16-18s State tournament, there were parents ready to fist fight in Rappahannock at the 10s State tournament over 3-year-olds who refused to share their toys, a relentless parent from Stafford (at the same tournament) who would not let up on Paul or Curtis Moore over her child who was called out for a swinging strike three while he hit and injured the catcher on his backswing (the player's mother refused to believe that was not catcher's interference). Plus, there were managers ready to fight with State officials at the State softball tournaments in Wise. We had the same player, an 8-year-old, ejected for the second year in a row at a District 10 baseball District tournament along with parents forcing their way into the press box to harass tournament officials.
- There were serious sportsmanship issues at most Regional tournaments hosted in the State with players, parents, and managers. Two Rookie protest members (both from Florida teams) wanted to fist fight each other over a protest in New Kent and Glenn Spangler had issues at the 12s70 Regional in Glen Allen with a Florida team. There were even more serious issues in Williamsburg with multiple Virginia and Florida teams (Manassas, Stafford, Okeehoelee, and Sarasota). The police had to be called at the final game of the 13-15s Regional tournament with two player and four parent ejections. Plus, a North Carolina manager was out of line for his criticism of the drawing of the pool play brackets.
- And, on top of all of that, there was a Virginia manager (from Manassas) ejected at the 13s World Series in Glen Allen for throwing his rule book into the stands over a call that was correct. A batter put a balk pitch in play with a bunt and the manager insisted the ball was dead as soon as the balk was called, which is not correct.

Paul stated that this behavior is unacceptable and the State (meaning all of us at this meeting) must make it stop. It was a major part of the discussion later in the meeting.

District reports:

D1 – Brandon Currence reported to Paul that the new park in New Kent is state of the art and hosted the Regionals. Brandon stunned the attendees by announcing this was his last meeting and that he is resigning as the D1 Commissioner. Brian Eamigh was introduced as Brandon's successor going forward. Brandon will remain as Commissioner Emeritus until his term expires on September 30, 2023.

D2 – Tommy Clary reported Brunswick rejoined Babe Ruth this season. South Hill received two sportsmanship awards at the State tournaments.

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

D4 – Ken Bosserman said that his District had no issues and that Shenandoah teams went to the softball 12U and baseball 12s60 World Series. Ken reported that there are not enough lines on the lineup card for when a team bats the Extra Plater (EP) in Rookie. Suggestion was to scratch through the word substitute on the lineup card. Paul illustrated how to do this. Babe Ruth should fix this issue with the lineup cards going forward.

D5 – No report.

D6 – Pat O’Brien reported Alexandria was a new league but cancelled a lot of fall ball games. Pat requested that he and Paul set up a meeting with Alexandria and the new Arlington president in the offseason.

D7 – No report.

D8 – Dave Cogar reported that Gainesville-Haymarket chartered but did not play in the postseason tournaments. Most of the kids play in the STARS (academy) program in the summer.

D9 – No report.

D10 – Chris Frazier said the team numbers increased nearly 20% in District 10. The District is gaining ground on the travel teams. They received a report that the community impact of hosting the 12s60 State tournament was greater than \$300,000.

D11 – No report.

State tournament review (baseball): John DeYoung reported that all the games scores, champion teams, runner-up teams and teams selected for the Don Rose Memorial Sportsmanship Award are posted on the State website. He discussed how the host for the 11s70 State tournament was charged for using the Town field because a “gate fee” was being collected. He empathized the importance of explaining the Parents Gate Pass Program (Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. Policy 1001) and the calculation of the Parents Gate Pass Program Fee as stated in that State Policy.

State tournament results

Cal Ripken:

Champions by District

District 3 2

District 4 2

District 7 2

Runners-up by District

District 1 4

District 3 1

District 5 1

Babe Ruth Baseball:

Champions by District

District 3 1

District 4 1

District 8 2

Runners-up by District

District 7 1

District 8 2

District 9 1

State tournament review (softball):

State tournament results

Champions by District

District 5	2
District 8	1
District 11	2

Runners-up by District

District 3	2
District 5	2
District 11	1

Regional tournament reports: Paul reported that tournament reports are on file with the Regional Commissioner.

Buddy Ball events in 2022: Paul reported on the success of the Buddy Ball events including pizza parties and medal ceremonies in Greene County managed by Sharon Gregory and in Williamsburg managed by Joel Schwartz.

2022 Champions Day review: Phil said that the Virginia Babe Ruth attendees at the Washington Nationals Champions Day recognition ceremonies were Arlington, Glen Allen, and Shenandoah. The Nationals held their Champions Day on a school night—in the past it was held at a weekend game. Paul will mention his concern to the Nationals about reverting to a weekend night and not a school night.

State of Baseball meetings: Paul reported that a series of meetings is being held in northern Virginia to discuss specific issues affecting baseball and youth sports overall, including recruitment and retention of umpires and players, sportsmanship and conduct of players and coaches, as well as travel, youth leagues, showcase, and high school participation.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2023 Budget: Phil Larcomb reported that although the fiscal year is not yet complete, it appears that the 2022 outcome will be close to budget. Final operating expenses may slightly be below operating revenue depending on final expenses in October 2022.

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. This expense is included in our operating budget.

Phil reported that with the decrease in value in our investment account, funds need to be generated elsewhere to allow the State to continue issuing World Series stipends for FY 2023.

MOTION: To increase the State Hosting Fee for baseball and softball State tournaments (State Policy 1007) from \$400 to \$500 and to bill all teams \$10 per chartered team for annual State dues. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Regional meeting: Paul said that the next Southeast Regional meeting will be held on February 3–4, 2023, in Williamsburg, VA.

Southeast Region Hall of Fame inductee: Paul reported that Rebecca Slough (Glen Allen) was inducted into the Southeast Region Hall of Fame during a ceremony on August 12 at the 13-Year-olds World Series in Glen Allen.

25-Year volunteer pins: Paul reported that David Gould (Northern Fairfax County Senior 16-18 Babe Ruth League president) and Norman Gray (New Kent Youth Association Baseball, Inc. umpire) were the latest Virginia Babe Ruth volunteers to be recognized for 25 years of volunteer service.

Virginia Babe Ruth grants: Paul said the prerequisites for grants are based on financial need vs. financial strength of the requesting league, past grant awards, and investment account performance of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. Paul reported that five applications were received by the September 1 deadline. Grants were distributed to Cradock (\$250 for equipment purchase), Rockbridge (\$500 for field drags) and NFC Babe Ruth (\$500 for backstop privacy slats). Grants for Charlottesville and Northside were deferred based on the financial strength of these two leagues and prior year grants.

2023 World Series and Regional baseball tournaments in Virginia: John DeYoung reported that Virginia will host two Babe Ruth World Series in 2023: 13-Year-olds (Glen Allen, starting August 10) and 14-Year-olds (Stafford, starting August 4), and, as of this date, we know that Virginia will host one Southeast Regional tournament in 2023: 12-Year-olds 70' (Arlington, starting July 18). [As of October 30, the hosts for the 11-Year-olds 70' and 16-18 Year-olds Southeast Regional tournaments had not been announced.]

Updated State baseball tournament host rotation table: John DeYoung presented the updated State baseball tournament host rotation table for 2023 to 2027. Chris Frazier suggested a change for 2023 which was agreed to by Dave Cogar. [The revised table was posted on the Virginia Babe Ruth State website's Documents Center ("VBR State Baseball Tournament Rotation") on October 17, 2022. Districts should confirm that they will be hosting their assigned 2023 State tournaments (8s – D3, 9s – D5, 10s – D11, 11s – D8, 12s60 – D10, 12s70 – D10, 13s – D4, 14s – D7, 13-15s – D1, 16-18s – D2, none – D6, D9) 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 2023. Signed contracts and the State Hosting Fee are due by the date of the State Spring Meeting.]

New leagues expected in 2023:

- Powhatan – Baseball District 3 (expansion of the 16-18 program and possible 13-15 team additions)
- Culpeper Softball – Softball District 8 (Rappahannock League)

State tournament host training: Paul said that the FY 2022 Tournament Directors training did not go as planned. It appears that all District Commissioners did not sit down with their respective State hosts and go over the slides in the training PowerPoint file. Paul recommended that 2023 meeting dates be set at the State Spring Meeting and two or three meetings be held next spring. Paul noted that the training needs to be more tailored to the host based on experience. Paul and Glenn Spangler will review the 2023 training slides and tailor them as needed. Paul also mentioned that the days of complementary rooms for umpires are gone owing to the economic effects of the pandemic on the hotel industry. NUA and VBRUA memberships were not up to par and that the leagues need to find a way to use more local and less non-local umpires for the State tournaments.

Umpire reports, training and recruitment: George Burke reported that five umpire training clinics were held in 2022 and that two clinics were canceled, one owing to COVID-19 and one owing to facility availability. Local leagues need to join the effort to recruit more adult umpires.

VBRUA compensation schedule for 2023: The group voted to keep the umpire fees at the current rates. George Burke 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. George 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. It was decided to continue with two umpires at all age levels. [The VBRUA compensation schedule for 2023 was posted on the Virginia Babe Ruth State website's Umpires Center ("Umpire Compensation Schedule") on October 26, 2022.]

Babe Ruth Alumni Association donation: (completed in "Moment of silence" above)

2022 rule book changes not in the new rules section (p. 3), and renumbered rules: John DeYoung reported that when he was checking the rule references in the 2022 MTIPs, he was dismayed to find that Rule 3.09 on page 50 in the 2022 Babe Ruth baseball rule book was a different rule than Rule 3.09 on page 50 in the 2021 Babe Ruth baseball rule book. (Rule 3.09 on page 50 in the 2022 Babe Ruth baseball rule book was Rule 3.12 on page 51 in the 2021 Babe Ruth baseball rule book. Rule 3.12 on page 50 in the 2022 Babe Ruth baseball rule book was Rule 3.15 on page 51 in the 2021 Babe Ruth baseball rule book.) None of these, and many more, changes were listed in the references on page 3 of the 2022 Babe Ruth baseball rule book.

Babe Ruth League, Inc. assumed ownership of the rules and rule numbers of the pre-2015 "Official Baseball Rules" with the publication of the 2017 Babe Ruth baseball rule book—compare page 32 of the 2016 Babe Ruth baseball rule book with page 34 of the 2017 Babe Ruth baseball rule book; in addition, read note 1 on page v of the 2015 edition of "Official Baseball Rules." Babe Ruth League, Inc. should ensure that all rules in the 2023 Babe Ruth baseball rule book that were in the 2017 Babe Ruth baseball rule book have the same rule numbers that they had in the 2017 Babe Ruth baseball rule book.

General discussion:

Owing to the previously discussed unsportsmanlike conduct issues at District, State, and Regional tournaments, Paul requested that a State Policy be adopted to increase penalties for manager, coach, and player ejections for unsportsmanlike conduct. The Board approved the following by a vote of 10-1:

If a manager is ejected, he or she will sit out the remainder of the game that he or she was ejected from plus two additional games. The same penalty applies to coaches who are ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct.

If a player is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct, he or she will sit out the remainder of the game that he or she was ejected from plus one additional game.

If the ejection takes place in the tournament's final game, the penalty will carry over to the next tournament level of play. The State has requested that the Regional Commissioner support this carryover penalty for any Virginia team affected.

Paul reviewed the Upromise.com handout received from Headquarters and encouraged all leagues and parents to take advantage of this free program to increase savings for college tuition.

John DeYoung explained that the change to Rule 11.06, paragraph 7, on page 29 of the 2022 Babe Ruth baseball rule book creates major problems for drawing tournament brackets at the State level. Rule 11.06, paragraph 7, on page 29 of the 2021 Babe Ruth baseball rule book states that "The host teams for all Divisions of baseball having received eligibility approval from Babe Ruth League, Inc., and at their league president's discretion, shall be eligible to enter official tournament competition one level below the tournament level they will be hosting." In the 2022 Babe Ruth baseball rule book, "... official tournament competition one level below the tournament level they will be hosting." in Rule 11.06, paragraph 7, was changed to "... official tournament-trail competition beginning at the District tournament level." This (and the subsequent part of the rule: "If a State or Regional host team participates in an official tournament trail competition prior to its first game as host team and wins, both it and the second-place team will advance to the next level. If the host team loses in an official tournament-trail competition prior to its first game as host team, it will be eligible to participate as the host.") means that for age groups for which a State is hosting a Regional tournament, the number of teams in the State tournament cannot be determined until the Regional host is either eliminated from or wins the District tournament, which in some instances is only 2 or 3 days before the State tournament starts.

Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. Policy 1004 allows the drawing of State brackets 3 weeks before the start of each State tournament to afford participants ample time to plan travel and make hotel arrangements. The MTIP for Virginia State tournaments states that "All managers, coaches, and players are to report at least 1 hour (baseball) or 2 hours (softball) prior to their first game for check-in and pre-game warm-ups." In order to maintain this situation and not require teams to plan to report on the first day of the State tournament when their first game may turn out to be the following day, John proposed that Virginia use the 2021 rule. A vote on this will be held at the State Spring Meeting.

[After the meeting, Paul reported that Jessica LaBella is our new Service Representative at Babe Ruth League headquarters. Her email address is jessica@baberuthleague.org.]

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Prepared by Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer