



Virginia

Babe Ruth Baseball & Softball



MINUTES
December 2, 2018
Dorey Park Recreation Building
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.	Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer
Curtis Moore, District 3 Commissioner	John Armentrout, Asst. SE Region Commissioner
Ken Bosserman, District 4 Baseball Comm.	Glenn Spangler, District 4 Softball Comm.
Dennis Cobb, District 4 Asst. Commissioner	Tom Richardson, Asst. State Comm., Training
Don Rose, Jr., State Umpire-in-Chief	Dave Cogar, District 8 Commissioner
Myron Struck, District 6 Commissioner	Brandon Currence, District 1 Commissioner
John Kemper, District 9 Commissioner	Lisa Kemper, District 9 Asst. Commissioner
Topper Phelps, District 3 Asst. Commissioner	Pat O'Brien, District 6 Asst. Commissioner
Jerry Barnes, Lynnhaven, District 1	Stephen Clarke, Lynnhaven, District 1
Robert Jones, Western Branch, District 1	Jason Tone, Western Branch, District 1
Scott Mistr, New Kent, District 1	Sean Connor, Glen Allen, District 3

Ken Bosserman offered the invocation, dedicating the day's business to the benefit of Virginia's Babe Ruth baseball and softball players.

Paul Link, State Commissioner, called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.

By unanimous VOTE, the reading of the minutes of the Spring meeting was waived.

Phil Larcomb reported that the State treasury contained, as of October 31, 2018, \$1,835.15 in the checking account (compared with \$10,447.65 at the end of October 2017) and \$91,206.38 in mutual funds (compared with \$89,551.58 at the end of October 2017). Several higher-than-anticipated budgeted expenses for the 2018 fiscal year were as identified as one-time-only expenses:

Regional meeting expenses increased by \$1,900. No Regional meeting was held in FY 2017. Promotion was up \$1,200. The State Commissioner caps were handed out at the Spring 2018 meeting.

Other expense increases: Website, legal defense, and windshield insurance claim of \$1,200.

Trophy costs increased \$1,900 owing to the addition of the championship shirts and rings.

State Treasurer's computer and software purchase was \$775.

Public acclaim (Washington Nationals Champions Day) was up \$1,800.

Total increase in unanticipated budget expenses for 2018 was \$8,775.

Since these expenses were one-time adjustments to our budget, for FY 2019 all these expenses were excluded from the proposed budget.

For FY 2019, Phil did not anticipate any increase to our fee structure and proposed that we keep the same team fee and State tournament fees as in the past budgets.

Southeast Region Hall of Fame

Our very own John DeYoung was inducted into this year's 2018 SE Region Hall of Fame. John was inducted in November at Myrtle Beach SC. A large and very thunderous applause was given to John by all present in the room. John's HoF profile is located at http://brlseregionhof.com/inductees/view_by_name.php. John's picture is featured on the Virginia and SE Regional websites.

OLD BUSINESS

State Commissioner's reflections on the 2018 season

Paul thanked everyone for their dedication to the youth of Virginia. Paul reported that the 2018 season was one of the best years ever in recruiting new leagues. There were 6 new Baseball leagues with 57 new teams and 6 new Softball leagues with 32 teams. District 10 was reactivated with 4 Baseball and 6 Softball leagues.

Paul reported that we expanded our tournament champion awards program to include medallions and pins, screened State Champion T-shirts for all age groups and champions rings for 16-18 Year-olds baseball and 16U softball.

Virginia hosted four Regional tournaments and participated in five World Series (two baseball and three softball). Manassas girls won the 8U Softball World Series. Glen Allen was the 12-Year-olds 70-foot U.S. Champion. Congratulations to both teams and leagues for a job well done.

The Virginia Executive Board implemented a new grant awards program for local leagues.

Virginia had the best online roster percentages (BB, SB 96%) posted in the Babe Ruth SI Play system, but still is not at the 100% goal. Paul called on each District Commissioner to get all leagues' rosters 100% online by June 1, 2019. Overall, Babe Ruth is at 80% for online roster submissions.

Paul mentioned that we still are having difficulties in recruiting umpires. We need to find solutions to recruit and retain qualified umpires.

We had two forfeit situations about the pitch count (one at the District level and one at the State level) in the tournament trail. Paul stated that we all need to focus on understanding the rules.

Paul said it was a problem when you ask a rules question to the four highest ranking officials in our Region's chain-of-command and you only get one right answer. We all need to better educate ourselves to prevent future forfeits at the District and State tournaments.

Paul asked the District Commissioners to send him the date of their next District meeting.

Feedback on new State tournament awards

The group was asked about the new State champions awards program and if the State should continue with spending the additional \$1,900 toward these awards. Paul explained that the die for the rings was a one-time fee of \$500. The group agreed the awards program was a success. It was VOTED unanimously to continue the awards program for the State tournaments.

New leagues in the 2018 season

Paul reported that we had six new leagues join in baseball and six in softball as previously reported.

State tournaments

State tournaments were again very well run by the Tournament Directors, who are really benefiting from the training that Phil Larcomb conducts prior to tournament time. However, we still had some minor issues at the State tournaments. Paul observed that there was less attention paid to the pitch count detail this year (even with the fourth coach allowed in the dugout) that lead to a forfeit. Paul said there was an issue with parking that resulted in a broken windshield in Rappahannock. There was an umpire enforcing the balk rule in the 9-Year-olds age group in Rockville that cost a team the game. There was a softball umpire in Fishersville using Little League softballs. There was a misunderstanding of how a non-starting pitcher could reenter at the pitcher position in Glen Allen. There was a misunderstanding of a non-charged injury visit to the mound in Winchester. Paul mentioned that we all as State representatives need to understand and implement the rules. Parents do not understand the rules and when there is confusion it leads to lots of email traffic exchanges well into the night. John DeYoung mentioned that the State website has all the past State tournament history going back 13 years. John said that the Winchester 12s70 opening ceremonies honoring law enforcement officials and first responders was fantastic.

District reports

D1 - Brandon Currence reported that he had a great year and welcomed two new leagues, Western Branch and Lynnhaven.

D2 - Paul reported that D2 had 100% online roster compliance.

D3 - Curtis Moore mentioned Glen Allen was the U.S. Champions at the 12-Year-olds 70-foot World Series. Curtis stated that softball in his District needs a lot of work.

D4 - Ken Bosserman said that District 4 had a great year in baseball with very few issues.

D4 - Glenn Spangler reported that softball had some communication issues but that he was looking to expand softball in District 4 next year.

D5 - No report.

D6 - Myron Struck reported he had issues with scheduling umpires.

D7 - No report.

D8- Dave Cogar said Manassas 8U Girls Softball were World Series Champions.

D9 - John Kemper said that District 9 had a great year except for the forfeit at the 14-Year-olds District tournament.

D10 – No report.

Regional tournaments

Virginia hosted four baseball Regional Tournaments in 2018—the Cal Ripken 11s70, 12s60, and 14s in Stafford, and the Babe Ruth 16-18s in Augusta. Paul Link reported on issues at the 11s70 and 12s60 tournaments. There were injury issues to four players, rain issues, breakfast meeting no shows, and a pitch-count issue.

Dave Cogar reported on the 14-Year-olds tournament. Dave said that Stafford did an excellent job as the Regional host. The opening ceremonies had to be cancelled, there were several rain and lightning delays, the County parks and rec staff did an excellent job of getting the fields ready for play, and Tallahassee, FL, won the tournament.

Glenn Spangler reported that there were no issues at all with the 16-18 Year-olds tournament.

Regional tournament results are posted on the Southeast Region website.

World Series

Virginia had two teams win World Series. Glen Allen was the 12-Year-olds 70-foot U.S. Champion. Manassas was the 8U Softball World Series Champion. Paul reported that the executive board awarded \$1,000 World Series travel grants to two Regional Champions from Virginia to help defray their World Series expenses.

Don Gowen traveled as a Task Force member for the Softball World Series in Florida. Don said the experience was fantastic. Don mentioned the Babe Ruth Network is free and that the live streaming was very good. Don said that Virginia leagues should check into live streaming league games. The equipment is inexpensive to set up for live streaming.

Don reported that 2019 will be Babe Ruth's 35-year anniversary for Girls Softball.

Buddy Ball

Don Gowen gave a review of the Buddy Ball event hosted in Herndon. In addition to having fun hitting the ball and running the bases with their buddies, the players were shown how to make safe and out calls by Donny Rose, Jr., making believe they were the umpire. The game was followed by a medal ceremony and a pizza party. Don reported that he will be expanding this concept further in 2019 to include other leagues that offer Buddy Ball in Virginia.

Champions Day at Washington Nationals Park

This was the fifth year that the Washington Nationals hosted State 12-Year-olds championship teams at one of its games. This year was a disaster as the first scheduled date was rained out only to be followed by rain on the second date even though the game was played. No teams showed for the second date owing to the continuing rain. The rain dates and the financial impact of spending \$3,742 for the parent's tickets resulted in 144 tickets not being used. To make the best of a bad situation, the 144 tickets were donated to the U.S. Army USO and Wounded Warrior programs at Fort Belvoir, VA.

It was VOTED unanimously to eliminate the precedent of paying for the parents' tickets to attend the Champions Day game.

Review of State dues invoicing policy change

In preparation for this year's (2019) billing cycle, Phil Larcomb and Paul Link extracted from the national database in October 2018 the numbers of rosters posted for each league in 2018 and created a spreadsheet of this information. The leagues will be billed starting in January when they charter based on the 2018 data. If there is a discrepancy between the roster versus charter numbers, the higher number will be billed.

Review of SI Play roster process and issues

Paul gave a summary report by District for both Softball and Baseball of the leagues who were not 100% with their online rosters. The financial impact to the State for this issue was \$1,200.

He also reviewed the Regular Season Roster Upload Guide and the Tournament Trail Rosters Guide that are now posted on the Virginia Babe Ruth and Southeast Region websites. These two documents were obtained after a meeting was held in Suffolk, VA, with Rob Connor, Brandon Currence (District 1 Commissioner), Jason Tone (President, Western Branch), Corinne Picataggi (League Secretary and Roster Submission Administrator for Williamsburg), and Paul to discuss SI Play issues. Paul reported the meeting was very helpful and that hopefully some of the changes suggested by Jason and Corinne will be implemented.

State tournament for 7-Year-olds

Scott Mistr spoke about a 7-Year-olds tournament that he started 2 years ago and has been a hit with his parents. Scott said the tournament would be 16 teams and played with Rookie-only rules for players 7 years old or younger. The tournament would be sanctioned by Virginia. There was much discussion in the room about bringing back the T-Ball tournament for 5-6 year-old players. Dave Cogar was going to check with Manassas. Other sites mentioned were Glen Allen and Stafford.

Tournament Directors training

This year, the tournament Umpires-in-Chief were added to the invitees to the Tournament Directors Training Workshop. It helped, reported Phil Larcomb, who coordinates the workshop. The training program seems to have helped upgrade and make more uniform across the State the way that the tournaments are handled, but there are still some issues from tournament to tournament. The workshop will be carried on, and this time the District Commissioners will also be invited. Two of the issues to be emphasized next year are how to deal with unruly behavior from players, coaches, and (or) fans and the pitch count.

NEW BUSINESS

Important dates for the 2019 season

Paul handed out a listing of the important dates for the 2019 season and reinforced both the January 4, 2019, Charter process opening date and the June 1 roster deadline date. Paul asked all District Commissioners to use the version posted on the Virginia and Southeast Region websites for their source of information.

2019 budget

Phil Larcomb reported that a balanced budget had been attained for the 2019 fiscal year. With the elimination of the one-time payments mentioned in the Treasurer's report and the Washington Nationals Champions Day parent's stipend, there will be no increase to State dues or tournament hosting fees.

Paul has contracted with an accounting firm for income tax preparation assistance and a legal firm to act as our Registered Agent. This will cost the State approximately \$500. We use the Registered Agent because although these functions are consistent year-to-year, our volunteers change over time. This single point of reference prevents important notices from going unnoticed and (or) falling through the cracks. Income from the reserves is more than enough to cover this cost.

Phil reminded the Board that the State reserves have increased significantly over the past 9 years, primarily because the State Commissioners have donated their expenses back to us at the end of each year and the stock market has been strong. The reserves now represent close to 4 years' cash flow because the stock market has been stronger than our need to draw on the reserves.

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

Donation to Babe Ruth's Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund

The decision to contribute \$500 to the Ron Tellefsen Memorial Fund was deferred for this year.

Discussion centered on the possibility of establishing a \$500 scholarship in Ron's name for a Virginia Babe Ruth player. Paul will discuss this with Steven Tellefsen and will report back at the Spring meeting.

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. Donny reported that the Fund's Board is considering adding a similar scholarship to be granted to a student from any high school in the State. The Board members voted in 2016 to donate to this Fund \$1,000 each year for 2 years and to reconsider the question this year. It was VOTED unanimously to fund the Don Rose fund for the next year and to make this an annual vote.

Southeast Regional meeting review

The Southeast Regional meeting was held on November 9 in Myrtle Beach, SC. Paul passed out several handouts from the Regional meeting: District Commissioner Guide, 2019 Rule Changes, Tournament Team Pre-Arrival Checklist, Refusal of Treatment Form, 2019 Fee Schedule, and 2019 Important Dates.

Paul announced that the Regional Tournament Gate Pass Fee for 2019 was moving back to \$500 because the Region had voted to use Pool Play for all Regional tournaments.

Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (Safe Sport Act)

Paul passed out three handouts on the Safe Sport Act. Paul and John DeYoung pointed out some key facts:

- Report sexual abuse to law enforcement or social service agencies within 24 hours
- Undergo abuse awareness and prevention training (all coaches)
- Implement policies limiting one-on-one interactions with minors
- Texting – cannot text player only, you must include the parent on the text
- A coach cannot hold a practice by himself or herself. They should have a parent(s) in the stands
- Fines – could be on the offender or even the person who witnessed the incident if not reported within the 24 hours

The following Virginia State Policy was posted on 3Dec18:

Policy Number: 1023 ~ Dated: 12/03/18

Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (S. 534 enacted February 14, 2018)

All adult members (managers and coaches) of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc. leagues in Virginia and West Virginia and all adults authorized by such members to interact with minor children shall adhere to the following:

1. Immediately (within 24 hours) report an allegation of child abuse of an amateur athlete who is a minor to a local law enforcement agency or local child protective services agency or the FBI.
2. Complete an approved Babe Ruth abuse prevention and awareness training course and maintain a certificate of completion on file.
3. Authorize a background check to be completed every 2 years.
4. Promote a safe environment in sports that is free from abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, of any minor.
5. Limit one-on-one interactions between a minor and an adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency situations.
6. Be aware that a violation of the above that results in a personal injury to a victim while a minor (and for a period not later 10 years after the victim reaches 18 years of age) may be liable for liquidated damages in the amount of \$150,000 and also be subjected to criminal prosecution.

Background check update

Paul said that it must now be done every 2 years (formerly 3 years) and can now be done through Sports Engine (formerly SI Play).

New Tournament Team Checklist

The new form is on the Virginia website. There were several changes including only one copy of the consent form is now needed and the elimination of the birth documents and league schedules requirement in the credentials book.

New leagues for 2019

Paul welcomed the following new league for the 2019 season: Lynnhaven (Virginia Beach).

Paul also reported that the Smithfield Recreation Association (along with Suffolk and Surry) and the Luray (Stanley) Little League have also expressed an interest in joining for 2019.

Rule changes for 2019

This by far was the most heated and talked-about discussion within the group regarding Steven Tellefsen's email dated 30Nov18, subject: 2019 Rule Changes. Paul Link received numerous emails complaining about the 2019 rule changes and the severe impact of Virginia leagues leaving Babe Ruth in 2019. Virginia could lose leagues if something is not changed at Babe Ruth Headquarters. After 30 minutes of discussion, the following was adopted by the State officers and District Commissioners:

The Virginia Board of Directors VOTED (17 to 1) to adopt the following State policy regarding 2019 Babe Ruth Rule 11.03, Paragraph 1(d).

Whereas the 2019 **Rule 11.03, Paragraph 1(d) and NOTE – Player Eligibility (Cal Ripken Baseball, Babe Ruth Baseball, Babe Ruth Softball)** – The following has been eliminated: “To be eligible for tournament play in any division of Babe Ruth League, Inc., a player must have played in at least one-half (1/2) of his/her team’s scheduled league games prior to the start of tournament play.”

The following Virginia State Policy was posted on 3Dec18:

Policy Number: 1022 ~ Dated: 12/03/18

Games Played Requirement

To be eligible for tournament play in any Division of Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc., a player must have played in at least one-half of his or her team's scheduled league games played prior to the start of tournament play. (When an odd number of games is involved, the player receives the benefit – e.g., for eligibility, one-half of 13 games played is 6 games. If a player is unable to meet this requirement because of injury or participation in scholastic sports, contact the District Commissioner to request approval from Babe Ruth Leagues of Virginia, Inc.)

Perfect Pitch Arm pitching machines

Virginia tested two demo Perfect Pitch Arm pitching machines for the Fall League—one in Arlington and one in Brentsville.

Feedback on the machine was that it is sturdier and easier to deploy with no additional anchors needed. The speed is more accurate, the pitches are straighter and without arch, and it is also easier to transport.

Paul passed out information for the District Commissioners to give to each of their Rookie leagues. Every league with a Rookie division will get a free machine just for filling out and mailing in the postcard.

2019 State baseball tournament hosts and contract status

John DeYoung passed out a handout to all present listing the dates of the tournaments. The tournament information can be found on the State website.

It was VOTED unanimously to start the first week of State baseball tournaments (Cal Ripken and 16-18s) on July 5, 2019.

2019 Regional baseball tournaments in Virginia

John DeYoung said there will be four Southeast Regional tournaments in Virginia. Stafford will host the 9s, 12s60, and 14s; Williamsburg will host the 13s.

2019 softball tournament reorganization

The State tournaments will be open to all leagues again starting this season. There will also be Regional Qualifier tournaments this year. If a team wins or comes in second in either the Regional Qualifier or the State tournament, they will qualify to play in the World Series. The Regional Qualifiers will not be allowed to play in the State tournament.

2019 State softball tournament and Regional Qualifier hosts

State: (8U – 10U – 12U) Manassas; (14U and 16U) Glen Allen
Regional Qualifier: Stafford

Umpire reports

Donny Rose pointed out that it is getting more difficult to recruit and then retain umpires. One of the issues is the fee schedule. The Regional umpire fees, which we follow, are not changed for 2019. Donny will increase umpire training and offerings this winter and early spring. Donny will be contacting the District Commissioners to provide him an umpires list for each league.

VBRUA compensation schedule

Donny said the umpire fees should remain the same for 2019.

Updated Regional lightning and hot weather policies for 2019

The policies were updated in March 2018. See the State website for details.

Babe Ruth Scholarship Program

Paul Link asked the group if anyone had applied for one of the scholarships this year? No one was aware of any applicants.

Paul said the application is now on the State website under the documents download center. Paul set the goal of having one applicant from each District in 2019 with 16-18 Year-olds and 18U leagues. He recommended doing this by personal discussion and not an email to demonstrate where the applications are and how easy it is to apply.

[After the State meeting, it was learned that two Virginia players were awarded Babe Ruth Alumni Association Scholarships: Zachariah Miller from Northern Fairfax County Senior Babe Ruth League and Brandon Slough from Glen Allen Youth Association Babe Ruth League. Congratulations to these two players.]

Virginia Babe Ruth grants

Paul made reference to the grants award program that was announced last spring. The Executive Board extended the application deadline by 30 days. The Executive Board found many applications incomplete and (or) missing details and back-up, and one that was late (even with the extra time allowed to complete) that would possibly have been approved. The Executive Board reviewed each application and made the following awards for the 2019 fiscal year:

Madison: \$1000 grant for new dugouts

Rappahannock: \$1000 grant for infield mix for five fields and gravel for the driveway entrance to Stuart Fields

Northern Fairfax County Babe Ruth: \$500 grant for a portable mound for the pitchers' warm-up area

Northern Fairfax County Senior Babe Ruth: \$500 grant for L and rectangular safety screens for the new CYA indoor field house

Northside: \$500 grant for a batting cage for their new 13-15 division

Total Grants Awarded: **\$3,500.00**

General discussion

5-run rule for Rookie tournaments—no objections from the group.

Splitting Virginia into two State groups with one Executive Committee—most of the group said to table this idea until the Spring meeting. Paul is establishing a committee to provide feedback and possible split scenarios for discussion.

Next meeting: Tentative date is March 17; place TBD

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Prepared by Phillip Larcomb, Secretary-Treasurer