



Babe Ruth League, Inc.
Southeast Region
Baseball & Softball



Southeast Region Annual Meeting
MINUTES
Friday, November 15 – Saturday, November 16, 2024
Embassy Suites
9800 Queensway Boulevard
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Participants:

John Lucas, Southeast Region Commissioner
Robert Faherty, Senior Vice-President/National Commissioner, Babe Ruth League, Inc.
John Armentrout, Assistant Southeast Region Commissioner
John DeYoung, Assistant Southeast Region Commissioner
Cherrie Sanders, Southeast Region Secretary
Jim Guzdowski, Southeast Region Umpire Advisor
Brandon Currence, Virginia State Commissioner
Dave Cogar, Virginia Assistant State Commissioner
Steve Cohn, Virginia District 8 Commissioner
Justin Sandford, Virginia District 3 Commissioner
Doug Strong, Tennessee State Commissioner
Jimmy Sanders, ENC State Commissioner
Wayne Harwell, WNC State Commissioner
Joe Lane, WNC Assistant State Commissioner
Tom Ready, Florida South State Commissioner
Barry Clymer, Florida North State Commissioner
Pat Eldridge, Florida State UIC
Jessica LaBella, Southeast Region Service Rep, Babe Ruth League, Inc.
Justin Brown, SCORE Sports
Ryan Rodebaugh, SportsEngine
Steve Powell, Clear Edge Sports

Welcome and opening comments:

John Lucas called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants. John thanked everyone for their dedication to the youth involved in Babe Ruth Baseball and Softball. Attendees introduced themselves.

News from Headquarters:

Robert Faherty has returned to the job of Commissioner. He reiterated that he leans heavily on the Service Representatives at Headquarters because they are more closely involved with the individual States and leagues. He previewed a few rule changes for 2025. A major change is that a manager/coach may be on more than one roster at the beginning of tournament play.

2025 SER tournament hosts:

John Lucas informed the group that hosts are still needed for the 13-16s and 14s. Tallahassee has expressed interest in hosting the 14s. Tom Ready made an offer to host the 13-16s at Rotary Park in Ocala, FL. [After the meeting, Ocala notified the Southeast Region that they will not be able to host this tournament.]

Some leagues have expressed interest in having a Southeast Region T-Ball tournament. Lawrenceburg, TN, is willing to host. This will be an invitational tournament. Based on comments from the State Commissioners, John will pursue this tournament.

Rules:

- Coach jersey number requirement – No action taken.
- Playing in another league because the home league does not have an age group can be worked out by individual case. Whatever is worked out, get it in writing regarding whether they can come back to home league, how many times can they move, etc.
- Courtesy runner in CR during heat issues – Motion by Brandon Currence to allow a courtesy runner for catcher only in 9s, 10s, 11s, and 12s age groups. Coaches will be given the option to use a courtesy runner. Any player not currently in the lineup may be used as a courtesy runner. (Players who have been ejected or removed due to injury are not eligible as courtesy runners). If there are only nine players, the player who made the last out will be used. Seconded by Jimmy Sanders, motion carried.
- Drop time limits for SER tournaments – There will be no time limits in any age group going into 2025 other than T-Ball. Motion by Doug Strong that SER Policy 20242038 be adjusted to read no time limits. Seconded by John Armentrout, motion carried.
- Rule change request regarding current DH rule – This will be clarified in the rule book.
- Review Rookie Rules (comparing SER rules with BRL rules) – Dave Cogar made a motion to approve the following change to SER Rookie Rule 4.C. “If a batter is hit by a pitch that is in the strike zone, or swings at any pitch and is hit by the ball while doing so it will be called a strike and a dead ball. If the call is strike three, the batter is out. Otherwise, the batter will be awarded first base as long as an attempt was made to avoid being hit by the pitch (Rule 6.08b in the 2024 rule book).” Seconded by John Armentrout, motion carried.

Policies:

- Review of host fees for SER tournaments currently set at \$3,000 by SER Policy 20191002. John Lucas offered a \$500 discount for 2025 if paid by December 1.
- Review team parent gate fees currently set at \$500. Wayne Harwell made a motion to raise the Parents and Fans Gate Pass Fee by \$100 across the board. Seconded by Dave Cogar, vote was tied 3-3. John Lucas voted in the affirmative to break the tie. The Parents and Fans Gate Pass Fee will be \$600 for all age groups starting in 2026. SER Policy 20191004 will be revised to change

\$500 to \$600 after the 2025 tournament season. Doug Strong suggested there be a set price to charge per person, per day. Dave Cogar made a motion to put a cap of \$8 per person, per day. Seconded by Jimmy Sanders, motion carried 3-2 with Wayne Harwell abstaining. 6 and under will be free.

- Teams not attending the icebreaker – No action taken; teams will continue to notify the host if they will not attend.
- Review cost of baseballs – The average price is \$70 per dozen.
- Review host hotels for the 13-16 and 16-18 Divisions – Florida tried a pilot program where they offered a number of hotels close by or cost effective. If the participating teams did not use one of those, they were charged a \$200 fee. The consensus was to offer this option to host leagues when they receive their training.
- Review Protest Committee requirements and selection – The SER Representative should sit in on protest meetings to provide guidance. This should be listed in items that the SER Representative is responsible for.
- Review pool play vs bracket play (with 3-game guarantee) – brackets for 7, 9, and 11 teams. Commissioners are asked to look at the proposal presented and provide feedback.
- Review umpire information:
 - Umpire NUA patches – An NUA patch will be included in the kit that is received on registration.
 - Review compensation and number of umpires used in a game – Tom Ready made a motion to increase compensation \$5 for everyone except Rookies. Seconded by Dave Cogar, motion carried.
 - SER Crew selection process – Currently, those who wish to be Crew Chief register on the SER website. When the Crew Chief is selected, he or she selects the other umpires on the Crew. It needs to be clarified that the Crew Chief selects his or her own crew and notifies the host early on if local people are needed.
- Player late arrival policy – John Lucas is asking for suggested reasons for approval or disapproval for late arrival.
- Submitting teams who could be invited to the World Series based on good play, need, etc. – Submit names of teams worthy of advancing to John Lucas. There were questions about making a slot for a team that did not win to advance.
- Review replacing players during tournament play – SportsEngine allows drop-add on tournament rosters as soon as between innings of a game; however, by rule (11.03, 1a), players may not participate until the next level of competition. Permission must be requested from and granted by Babe Ruth League, Inc. for the player to be eligible.

Representatives reports:

Justin Brown of SCORE Sports, the official uniform and apparel provider for Babe Ruth Baseball and Babe Ruth Softball, gave a presentation. For each team sets of uniforms ordered, they will reimburse league for charter fees. The reimbursement will most likely be a deduction from the league's invoice. They offer a package deal of pants, shirts, belt, and socks for \$25.

Jessica LaBella, Southeast Region Service Representative, gave a presentation that included the chartering process and deadlines. Rosters are not printable until fees are paid. There is an Increase in director's and liability insurance. Coaches must complete a background check every 2 years. SportsEngine is where coaches obtain their background check. As long as eligibility requirements are met, the tournament roster will print with the information on it so other documents don't have to be included in the binder. When a league gives SportsEngine membership to coaches, they will receive an email enabling them to access their account. District Commissioners should be making sure **that** rosters

are being submitted prior to first game. This is very important especially in insurance issues. Human Kinetics (1-800-747-5698), which can be found on the BRL website by going to “PLAYERS, COACHES, & UMPIRES” and then “COACHING EDUCATION,” is the Coaching Education Program recommended by BRL for Babe Ruth League coach certification. This has to be done one time and is good for the coach’s career. Coaches upload the certificate of completed training in SportsEngine within their membership, which is now a required credential in addition to the background check and APS training. Jessica provided her direct access number to enable Commissioners to get a quicker resolution of any problems.

Ryan Rodebaugh, SportsEngine, explained the differences between free and premium services. There is a mobile app available to free and premium customers. Ryan suggested using the app. He also went into detail about the Florida law changes for background checks. Those changes will not be effective for another year and he suspects implementation will be delayed further.

Steve Powell, Clear Edge Sports, introduced the newest version of the pitching machine and explained the functions available.

Proposed budget:

John Lucas presented the 2025 proposed budget. It is a balanced budget based on everyone submitting host fees early to take advantage of the discount. Championship rings have been ordered for two age groups for 2025.

Tournament planning:

- Review host training – Host Tournament Director (TD) must attend training. Any additional people they would like to invite are welcome to attend.
Contact info for each manager (meeting agenda item) is essential due to rain outs, etc.
- Review MTIP – Any changes for check-in must be communicated and added to MTIP. Press box restrictions should be emphasized. Those allowed in the press box should be spelled out and enforced.
- Emphasize press box restricted access – only certain people allowed. Will be spelled out. TD and SER Representative are in charge of press box.

Pre-tournament issues:

- Why are some State champion teams not advancing? – if not advancing, game may not have to be played. Invitational tournaments and travel ball are big reasons. Invitational for 9s and 11s will go away next year as these age groups will have a regular tournament trail. No clear solution, but many reasons.

During-tournament issues:

- Review SER representative duties at tournaments – SER Representative is in charge of the tournament. Works with the TD to get things done. SER Representative has final authority. Make sure tournaments are run under the SER guidelines. SER does not interfere with game once it starts except in cases of weather issues.
- Host Tournament Director directs the tournament under the guidance of the SER Representative.

- Copies of the agenda for meeting to all in advance – be prepared to communicate with Host TD in advance. Changes must be shared by all parties with everyone involved. Changes will be made in our paperwork to encourage communication.
- Host TD is in charge of press box with oversight by the SER Representative
- Lineup forms signed by manager with Protest Committee member name on sheet
- Review player check-in procedure (prior to first game) – Policy will remain unchanged.
- National Anthem protocol – Make sure that coaches understand the protocol (Federal Law) for the National Anthem.

Miscellaneous items:

- SER T-Ball tournament – assigned to Rookie tournament in Lawrenceburg, TN, for 2025.
- T-Ball rules – review of rules – Change #13 to allow one defensive coach down baseline in foul territory. Coach may set the tee and then back out of play.
- World Series invitational tournaments. No action taken. This is a Headquarters decision.
 - World Series softball tournaments with only three teams?
 - World Series baseball tournaments with only five teams?
- Non-agenda group items
 - Heat index – Guidelines for the host facility will be used. If they have no guidelines, SER policy will be followed. At the pre-tournament meeting, coaches will be advised of the guidelines that will be used.

Adjourn:

Doug Strong made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Cherrie Sanders, Secretary