

The 2023 NCBL Annual Winter Meeting Minutes

Sunday, February 19, 2023

Nepean Sportsplex – Hall F

Teams Absent (4): Capitals, Knights, Lumberjacks, Lynx

1. Call to Order - Meeting called to order at exactly 9:34am.

2. Confirmation of Teams Added in 2019 from Probationary to Full Status – Team Korea were promoted to full status members of the NCBL.

(moved by Commissioner Beelen, seconded by Bombers, **carried**)

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – The minutes of the 2022 NCBL Annual Kick-Off Meeting on Sunday, April 24, 2022 were approved without change.

(moved by Secretary Bond, seconded by Bandits, **carried**)

4. Commissioner’s Report on 2022 – The official 2022 Commissioner’s Report was attached in the handout package. Commissioner Beelen noted some of the highlights:

- Was very pleased with the competitive balance during the 2022 playoffs in all 4 tiers.
- Praised Umpire-in-Chief/Assignor Mark Keeping for his outstanding job in his dual roles last season.
- Praised all members of the Operations Committee for handling league discipline, a critical job that they do at the highest possible level.
- Praised Registrar Joe Beelen for creating the infrastructure to get all teams to submit their statistics and to generate boxscores for all games, as well as archiving it all for historical reference; a very unique feature few other leagues have.
- The 2022 banquet set a new attendance record, with a strong surplus. The switch to disposable plates and cutlery worked well and saved \$10 per ticket for all attendees.
- The overall budget situation was in the black.
- Talked about the success the Ottawa Baseball Infrastructure Improvement Group (OBIIG) made in 2022, and is looking forward to continued improvement and success in 2023. The OBIIG is a group made up of several other city baseball associations that collaborate and speak with one voice in order to get the city to improve baseball facilities and the related maintenance.

5. Reports from Umpires and Operations Committee for 2022 - Umpire-in-Chief Mark Keeping discussed the “easy year” he had last season, made possible by his great team of umpires who worked more games than would normally be expected. UIC Keeping also put out the call for any players who may be interested in doing a few games on bases, to get in touch with him for more information. Even someone doing a couple of games a year makes a big difference.

OPS Committee member Neal Phadnis used most of his time to praise OPS Committee member Louis Gadbois' rookie season on the OPSCOM. His contributions and those of the other OPSCOM members were immeasurable and made going through the paperwork for the 30 or so ejections from last season much easier. Mr. Phadnis wouldn't go as far as saying it was an "easy year" though.

OPS Committee member Ben Milinkovich was also present, and chimed in with a plea to all NCBL managers: When an ejection happens during one of your games, on either team, please get those ejection reports in ASAP.

6. Financial Report for 2022 - NCBL Treasurer Craig Cornell, discussed in great length and detail, the status of the league's finances. Of note: There were no outstanding issues from 2022, and the full financial reports will be available by the NCBL Spring Meeting. Treasurer Cornell was also excited to share that the league's bank account can now accept e-transfers; meaning teams no longer have to send payments to his personal account.

7. Team Intentions for 2023 – To get a general idea of what the season is going to look like (# of teams + tier breakdown), Commissioner Beelen officially announced the folding of 4 franchises, and then asked each still-active team to give their "unofficial" status for the 2023 season. Of note:

- The Cornwall River Rats (T1), Kingston Ponies (T1), Sharks (T2), and Dukes (T4), have folded.
- The Pirates will make a pitch to stay in Tier 1
- The Blue Jays will make a pitch to stay in Tier 2
- The Winchester Heat will not fight their automatic move up to Tier 2
- The Rideau Valley Reapers will make a pitch to move up to Tier 2
- The Coyotes will not fight their automatic move down to Tier 4
- The Bytown Barons will not fight their automatic move up to Tier 3

(the Tier structure will become official at the Spring Meeting in March)

8. New Team Application: Canada Reds (Baseball Academy) - The Canada Reds, represented by owner Robert Fatal, made an in-person pitch to join the NCBL (in Tier 1). During the question & answer period, concerns were raised about the overall inexperience of their potential roster, and the challenges a team with several university bound players could and would face during the NCBL playoffs. The league ultimately voted the Reds in, with the condition that they'd have to play their inaugural season in Tier 2.

*(moved by Red Sox, seconded by Cubs, **carried**)*

****Upon learning that their request for Tier 1 was declined, the Canada Reds opted not to accept a spot in the NCBL****

9. Constitution and By-Law Amendments - Officially tabled until the Spring meeting. If anyone has any amendments they'd like to propose, submit to Commissioner Beelen ASAP so he can get the literature out to the teams before the next meeting.

10a. Other Business: The Jean Lazure Proposal – Jean Lazure, the 2017 Joe Beelen Volunteer of the Year award winner, proposed that beginning this season the league donate \$1,000 to a registered charity, chosen by that year’s NCBL Volunteer of the Year.

(moved by Bombers, seconded by Cubs, **carried**)

10b. Other Business: NCBL Zoom Meetings - Anthony De Young (Blue Jays) wondered if it was possible for the league to go back to virtual “Zoom” meetings moving forward, **or** if the league could live broadcast the in-person meetings for those teams who can’t find a single player to attend, **or** if the league could record the meetings and have them posted online for interested parties to download. Neither idea gained any traction, as no seconder could be found.

10c. Other Business: AED Access - Gary Duke (Braumeisters) requested permission from the league to speak on behalf of the league in a project to have automated external defibrillators (AED’s) on-site, and easily accessible, at all NCBL fields.

(permission: **granted**)

10d. Other Business: MSBL World Series NCBL Team - Graeme Nichols (Athletics) is putting together a team for the MSBL World Series in Arizona this October. If anyone 40+ is interested in playing, or is looking for more information, please get in touch with Mr. Nichols ASAP.

10e. Other Business: Updated Baseball Canada Rules - The playing rules for the NCBL follow those of Baseball Canada. We don’t yet now if any of the new significant MLB rule changes have been adopted by Baseball Canada this year, but we will by the Spring meeting, at which point we could vote to ignore on a case-by-case basis.

10f. Other Business: Moving from Team Bases to Field Bases - An idea was discussed about whether it would be feasible to purchase a set of bases for each field the NCBL uses (that doesn’t already have one on-site) and store them there for teams to use. This idea will be revisited at the Spring meeting, where we will decide if it’s worth undertaking, and if so, how we’d go about doing it (one field as a pilot project, all-in, etc.)

11. Next Meeting – The 2023 Annual Spring Meeting will be held at some point in mid or late March.

12. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at exactly 11:11am.

Action Items Tabled for the Spring Meeting:

1. The 2023 NCBL Banquet venue (stay or switch)
 2. Constitution and By-Law Amendments
 3. Voting (against) potential new Baseball Canada rules
 4. Discussing the logistics of storing a good set of bases at each field
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