

# The 2024 NCBL Annual Winter Meeting Minutes

Sunday, February 4, 2024  
Nepean Sportsplex – Hall E F

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**Teams Absent (2):** Irish, Ravens

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**1. Call to Order** - Meeting called to order at exactly 12:35pm.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting** - The minutes of the 2023 NCBL Annual Kick-Off Meeting on Sunday, April 30, 2023 were approved without change.

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

**3. Confirmation of Teams Added in 2023 from Probationary to Full Status** - The Padres were promoted to full status members of the NCBL by a majority vote.

*(moved by Barons, seconded by Giants, **carried**)*

**4. Commissioner's Report on 2023** - The official 2023 Commissioner's Report was attached in the handout package. Commissioner Beelen read some of the highlights:

- The Commissioner was very pleased with the competitive balance during the 2023 playoffs in all 4 tiers, highlighted by 12 upsets in 23 series.
- Demographics of the participants in the NCBL were released for the first time ever. Of note from 2023:
  - Most NCBL players live in the West End (42%)
  - Tier 1 had the youngest average age (28.5 years)
  - The SweatSox were the 2nd oldest team in the NCBL (42.0 years), behind only the Braumeisters (50.15)
- Praised Registrar Joe Beelen's creation of 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to get all teams to submit their statistics and to generate boxscores for all games, as well as archiving it all for historical reference; a very unique feature few other leagues have.
- Praised Umpire-in-Chief/Assignor Mark Keeping for his outstanding job in his dual roles last season, as well as his deputies Neal Phadnis and Paul Giles.
- Praised all members of the Operations Committee for their handling of league discipline, a critical job that they do at the highest possible level.
- The switch to the Police Association Memorial Hall for the 2023 Banquet was an absolute success by every available metric, and specifically thanked both SamBat and T-Bats for their trophy bats for award winners, as well as Brian Samuel for his work behind the scenes to help this hopefully permanent venue switch.
- The overall budget situation was comfortably in the black with a strong surplus, thanks in part to Treasurer Cornell who always does a great job with the league's finances. The Commissioner also noted that there may be an opportunity to save even more money this coming season by purchasing a new type of baseball from T-Bats, that is similar to the one we've been using but not as expensive. Research on this matter is ongoing.

**5. Reports from Umpires and Operations Committee for 2023** - Umpire-in-Chief Mark Keeping took the stage for his annual State of the Umpires address, some of the highlights:

- There were only 2 missed assignments last year, and they were due to last minute emergencies that couldn't have been predicted.
- Ejections were down last year compared to 2022, so good job all.
- Reminded teams that he's always open to receiving umpire feedback, whether it be positive or negative, any time. Don't be shy.
- Made his usual appeal for teams to see if any of their players would be interested in doing a few games on bases, and if so to get in touch with him for more information. Even someone doing a couple of games a year makes a big difference.
- If any teams are considering running a tournament this year and require the services of the NCBL umpires, to please get in touch ASAP.

OPS Committee member Brett Stott 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 submitted ASAP. Like UIC Keeping, he also encouraged teams to contact him or any other member of the OPS COM at any time if they have any questions.

**6. Election of Officers** - All NCBL officer positions are up for re-election in 2024, but only the "umpire" positions were voted on at this meeting (the rest will take place at the Spring Meeting). All incumbents were willing to stand for another term.

- Mark Keeping was acclaimed as Umpire-in-Chief
- Mark Keeping was acclaimed as Umpire Assignor
- Neal Phadnis was acclaimed as Deputy Umpire-in-Chief
- Paul Giles was acclaimed as Deputy Umpire-in-Chief, a position he held interimly since July 2023.  
*(motion for all positions moved by Commissioner Beelen, seconded by Coyotes, carried)*

**7. Team Intentions for 2024** - To get a general idea of what the season is going to look like (# of teams + tier breakdown), the Commissioner asked teams subject to an automatic move up or down a tier, and those who are considering switching tiers, to give their "unofficial" status for the 2024 season:

- The Cubs will make a pitch to stay in Tier 1
- The Winchester Heat will make a pitch to stay in Tier 2
- The Braves will make a pitch to stay in Tier 2
- The Lumberjacks will make a pitch to stay in Tier 3
- Los Latinos will make a pitch to move up to Tier 2
- The Crusaders will most likely not fight their automatic move down to Tier 4
- Los Vampiros make a pitch to stay in Tier 4
- The Coyotes will make a pitch to move up to Tier 3

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

**8. New Team Application Process** - Commissioner Beelen noted that 5 groups have expressed interest in joining the NCBL as a new team, and he's already received 2 completed applications (Carleton University Baseball Team, and a Los Latinos spinoff). Groups not yet submitting an official application include: a Blue Jays spinoff, a Team Korea spinoff, and a group with no current team affiliation.

While no teams have folded (yet), and neither application is from a group outside the city, it is unknown at this time whether or not the league even has space for a new team.

**9. Constitution and By-Law Amendments** - A proposal from the Blue Jays about adding the Extra Hitter Rule to Tier 2, as well as any other amendment proposals, were officially tabled until the Spring Meeting, after the Tier's are official. 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.

**10. Other Business: NCBL Classic Division** - Gary Duke (Braumeisters) discussed the creation of a Classic Division in the NCBL, some of the highlights:

- A 4-team division, independent of the other Tiers (so a player could play on both a Tier 1-4 team and in this division), but part of the NCBL (for insurance and umpire purposes).
- Must be 50+ years old to play.
- Vintage baseball rules.
- A 9-game season, with games taking place on either Saturday or Sunday morning both in and out of the Ottawa region.
- You can wear any uniform during these games (like Fall Ball).
- You can sign up as a team or be placed on a team if you sign up as an individual.
- Cost per team will be approximately \$1,650.
- Interested parties should contact Gary Duke and/or Hank Beelen for more information.

**11. Other Business: Registrar Business** - Registrar Joe Beelen discussed some of the issues he and/or others discovered or brought up at some point in 2023:

- If anyone has a digital stat tracking solution that is superior to our current (free) Google Sheets program, to come up with a proposal for the league ASAP.
- There were multiple players who played in games last year without having signed the appropriate waivers; a proposal at the next meeting about appropriate penalties may be forthcoming.
- There was a discussion about whether or not to increase the penalty for late or missing umpire ratings. A proposal at the next meeting may be forthcoming.
- There was a discussion about whether or not to eliminate all "playoff exceptions", a process by which a player who didn't play in enough regular season games could still qualify for the playoffs. A proposal at the next meeting may be forthcoming.

**12. Next Meeting** - The 2024 Annual Spring Meeting will be held at some point in late February or early March.

**13. Adjournment** - Meeting adjourned at exactly 1:34pm.

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**Action Items Tabled for the 2024 Spring Meeting:**

1. Election of "non umpire" NCBL officer positions
  2. Constitution and By-Law Amendment: Adding Extra Hitter Rule to Tier 2 (Blue Jays)
  3. Constitution and By-Law Amendment: Everybody bats in Tier 4 playoffs (Bombers)
  4. Constitution and By-Law Amendment: Creating a penalty for playing with an illegal player (Registrar)
  5. Constitution and By-Law Amendment: Increasing the penalty re: missing/late umpire ratings (Registrar)
  6. Constitution and By-Law Amendment: No playoff exceptions (Registrar)
  7. Constitution and By-Law Amendment: Multiple (OPS COM)
  8. Discussion of mandatory/optional umpire ratings in the playoffs
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