The 2025 NCBL Annual Winter Meeting Minutes

Sunday, February 2, 2025
Nepean Sportsplex – Hall E

Teams Absent (3): Irish, Lumberjacks, Reapers

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1. Call to Order - Meeting called to order at exactly 11:07am.

2. Confirmation of Teams Added in 2024 from Probationary to Full Status - The Bytown Bats and Ottawa Gladiators were promoted to full status members of the NCBL, each by a unanimous vote.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting - The minutes of the 2024 NCBL Annual Kick-Off Meeting on Sunday, April 28, 2024 were approved without change.

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

4. Commissioner's Report on 2024 - The official 2024 Commissioner's Report was attached in the handout package. Commissioner Beelen read some of the highlights:

- Overall Operations: The Commissioner was very pleased with the competitive balance during the 2024 playoffs in all 4 tiers, highlighted by 9 upsets in 24 series, including a 7th place team (Latinos) winning the Tier 2 championship.
- Demographics: For the second straight season, the league was able to gather data regarding NCBL participants:
    - Most NCBL players live in the West End (43%, up from 42% in 2023).
    - The average age of all players in the league is 32 (down from 33 in 2023).
    - The Braumeisters were once again the oldest team in the league (48.57), followed by the Braves (40.96), and then the SweatSox (40.11).
- Stadium: For the first time since 2015, every team played at least 1 game at the Stadium, a trend we hope to continue in 2025, if the budget allows.
- Boxscores and Statistics: For the 5th straight year, praise for 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to get all teams to submit their statistics and to generate boxscores for all games, as well as archiving it all for historical reference; a very unique feature few other leagues have.
- Umpires: Acknowledged 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.
- OPS COM: Acknowledged the other members of the Operations Committee (Brett Stott, Ben Milinkovich, and Louis Gadbois) for their continued success at handling league discipline, a critical job that they do at the highest possible level.
- Banquet: Held at the Police Association Memorial Hall for the second straight season, the banquet was an absolute success by every available metric, and specifically thanked both SamBat and T-Bats for their trophy bats for award winners. The banquet set a new attendance record with 193 attendees.
- Finances: Despite most of our direct costs (fields, umpires, baseballs) being over budget, the overall budget remained in the black thanks to some of our non-direct costs coming in under budget (umpire assigning, umpire monitoring, banquet).
- Baseballs: The second half of 2024 + playoffs were played using a new type of baseball provided by T-Bats at considerable savings vs the ROML ball used prior. A detailed statistical analysis determined there was no significant performance difference on offense or defense with this new ball, and in order to save money, recommended we continue to use the T-Bats ball in 2025.

5. Decision Vote on Baseballs for 2025 - The team representatives debated the pros and cons of the 2 different types of baseballs used in the NCBL last year (ROML vs T-Bats), specifically regarding the overall cost, quality, and science behind each ball. A motion was made to have each tier vote on which ball they'd like to use in 2025.

*(moved by Battalion, seconded by Padres, **carried**)*

The Tier-by-Tier Voting Results:

Tier 1 voted to use the ROML ball this season
Tier 2 voted to use the ROML ball this season
Tier 3 voted to use the ROML ball this season
Tier 4 voted to use the ROML ball this season

6. Reports from Umpires and Operations Committee for 2024 - Umpire-in-Chief Mark Keeping and Deputy Umpire-in-Chiefs, or is it Umpires-in-Chief, Neal Phadnis and Paul Giles took turns at the stage for their annual State of the Umpires/OPS COM address, some of the highlights:

- Praised the entire umpiring team for another season of near-perfect coverage.
- Noted that since most umpires live in the west end, the (possible) addition of the Cappamore Park field to the NCBL rotation would help even more with umpire coverage.
- Reminded the teams that it's not the OPS COM that determines length of suspensions, it's a random committee of their own peers.
- The Operations Committee is actively looking for a Tier 2 Representative to replace Louis Gadbois, who is on sabbatical in 2025.
- Celebrated the following teams for having 0 ejections since 2018: Bats, Braumeisters, Crusaders, and Rockets.

7. Financial Report for 2024 - NCBL Treasurer Craig Cornell was not in attendance, but promised to provide the 2024 financial reports at the Spring Meeting.

8. Team Intentions for 2025 - 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 2025 season:

- The Cubs will make a pitch to stay in Tier 1.
- The Braves will make a pitch to stay in Tier 2.
- The Blue Jays will make a pitch to stay in Tier 2.
- The Padres will not fight their automatic move up to Tier 2.
- The Bytown Bats will make a pitch to stay in Tier 3.
- The Gladiators will not fight their automatic move up to Tier 3.
- The Lynx will make a pitch to move up to Tier 3.

(the Tier structure will become official at the 2025 Spring Meeting)

9. New Team Application Process - Commissioner Beelen noted that 8-9 groups have expressed general interest in joining the NCBL as a new team. Despite no current teams indicating they were folding or merging, the Commissioner is confident the league can run with 35 teams this season.

10. Constitution and By-Law Amendments - A proposal 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.

11. Other Business: Tier 3 President - Commissioner Beelen noted that Tier 3 President Stu Hayes has resigned from his position effective immediately, and a vote to elect a new Tier 3 President will hopefully take place at the Spring Meeting.

- A vote to elect a new Tier 4 President may also be needed if the Lynx' pitch to move to Tier 3 is approved, and John Mendonca (Lynx) is forced to vacate the position.

12. Other Business: Vintage Baseball Federation of Ontario - A letter from Paul Freeman, the new Director for the 33+ Division with the Vintage Baseball Federation of Ontario (VBFO) was included in each team's information package, as well as emailed to the team reps. For more information, you can also contact Gary Duke of the Braumeisters.

13. Next Meeting - The 2025 Annual Spring Meeting will be held at some point in late February or early March.

14. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at exactly 11:55am.

Action Items Tabled for the 2025 Spring Meeting:

1. Election of a Tier 2 OPS COM Representative
2. Election of Tier 3 President
3. Election of Tier 4 President*
4. Constitution and By-Law Amendment: Adding Extra Hitter Rule to Tier 2 (Blue Jays)
5. Other Constitution and By-Law Amendments
