



Meeting of April 2, 2005

Kings Valley Wesleyan Church

Teams represented:

Fundamental Baptist, Kings Valley Wesleyan, Main Street Baptist, North Side Assembly,
Rothesay Baptist, Saint John Vineyard, Seaview, St. James the Less

Teams absent:

Forest Hills, Kennebecasis Baptist, Kings Way Assembly

League Executive present:

Vance Crozier (president)
John Greer (umpire coordinator)

Please note

A second meeting, April 16th, 2pm at Kings Valley Wesleyan, will be held to confirm league costs & committed teams. As not all teams were present at the previous meeting, this meeting will also revisit the bat & umpire issues mentioned below.

- Vance Crozier

2005 Teams...

Saint John Vineyard, North Side Assembly, Seaview, Rothesay Baptist, Kings Valley Wesleyan and Main Street Baptist indicated they would be fielding teams this year. Fundamental Baptist will also be fielding at least one team, with the possibility of a second team entirely from their own church, or a split squad with another church - John Landry to confirm as soon as possible. At this point Kings Way Assembly, Kenebecasis Baptist and Forest Hills are all expected to field teams. Salvation Army has expressed an interest in a team of their own, but no positive contact has been made at this point - Vance Crozier to follow up on this matter. St. James the Less is not fielding a team this year, but have some players willing to join another team.

2005 Financial notes...

Charlie Andrews was unable to attend this meeting, but field costs, trophy costs and balls remain similar to last year's budget. Umpire fees will be down this year due to a new format (see **Umpires** below) and we will be taking on cost for mats (see **Mats** below) Roughly \$200 is still outstanding to Shawn Titus for umpiring pay - The same amount is owed from last year by Main Street Baptist and is expected to be paid along with this year's entry fee.

Final costs can not be determined as soon as uncommitted teams are sorted out.

The Schedule...

Barring any changes by the City of Saint John, the season will start on Friday, May 20 and end Friday, September 2. The All Star Game will be held from 6-9 on Monday, June 27 with a regular scheduled game to follow in the late slot. Last year's scheduling of regular season games until mid-August and a compressed playoff was well-received, and will be applied this year also. A full Saturday in mid-August at Shamrock will be requested from the City - if this is possible all teams will be involved in the first round of the playoffs. If a Saturday is not available, the top 6 teams will be involved in the playoffs. Unused fields during the playoffs will be used, *if possible*, by non playoff teams.

Seaview has requested, and been granted, no Monday games during the regular season due to the distance their players need to drive on game nights. As with last season, they will play in back-to-back slots as needed to make up for those games. Seaview prefers these back-to-back nights to occur in June or late August to avoid time periods when some of their players are unavailable.

If you know that your team will not be available for a Monday or Friday, *please advise the executive immediately*. We will try to accommodate these nights as best as we can.

Main Street mentioned that last year's schedule was heavy on late Mondays. Makeup games due to rainouts can make this difficult, but every effort will be made to keep a balanced schedule.

The issue of dropping late Monday time slots altogether if we lost a team was discussed, but passed on for the time being as the per team cost savings was negligible. Larry Taylor is going to contact the Town of Quispamsis concerning field availability and costs in the valley - it may be a viable option in the future considering the number of teams in the area.

Umpires... (to be discussed again, April 16th meeting)

There are very few places to cut costs in a softball league - umpiring is one of them. It was decided that only one umpire would be used for the regular season, two in the playoffs. A third umpire may be added if possible in the final rounds. This will cut roughly \$1000 dollars from the league budget. It is requested that team reps remind their players that this is not only a quality softball league, but a ministry as well. Please impress on your players the need to maintain a christlike attitude on and off the field as the umpires will be taking on a greater responsibility alone. Some plays may be missed along the way this season, but given this is a Christian league, we should all be able to admit it if we are tagged out without the ump seeing, etc. This is a fellowship, right?

Umpires, continued...

The other downside of the one-ump system is what to do if an umpire is suddenly unable to make a game. In the event that this happens, the team managers will have to bite the bullet - one manager from each side will need to umpire a single game each.

Given the increased expectations placed on our umpires, and potentially managers, John Greer and Larry Taylor will be holding two training days on the first two Saturdays in May. Umpires and a team rep will be expected to attend at least one of these days. Many thanks to John & Larry!

Mats...

Coinciding with the one-umpire system will be the re-introduction of the mat. As we all remember from the past few years, the batters boxes and foul lines are inconsistent at best. Use of the mat will eliminate the need for umpires to determine whether the lines are right or wrong, and cut out a strike zone in the dirt with their heels. A mat will also give the pitchers a positive target for the strike zone even after the chalk has disappeared. Managers are asked to encourage their players to swing the bat! Vance is to check with local suppliers and order the mats as soon as possible.

Bats.... (to be discussed again, April 16th meeting)

Over the past few years expensive high-performance bats have become more common with some teams. Several points were raised concerning these bats. The first concern is player safety, especially our pitchers. The ball is coming back through the middle faster and with more speed than in past seasons, and more pitchers are being hit or almost hit more often. To combat this, the league has been trying to source the most appropriate flight-restricted balls, as well as determine which bats to restrict on a seasonal basis. The second concern is the expense associated with buying high priced performance bats to keep up with other teams equipment. It was openly admitted by all present that the teams with the better bats have a distinct advantage over those teams that choose not to spend as much on equipment.

The option of reverting all the way back to wooden bats was discussed on both cost and safety grounds, but dismissed quickly. Three motions were voted in...

1. All bats that arrive at a field will be available for use by all teams. If someone is uncomfortable sharing a bat for whatever reason, it should not be brought onto the field.
2. Starting in the 2007 season, the league will purchase a standard lot of bats on behalf of the teams, with this cost included in the league budget, and therefore the individual team costs. Existing bats will be allowed to be used in the meantime, with new bat purchases to be approved by the league using the previous "BPF" standard.
3. In anticipation of the standardized 2007 bats, a committee will investigate the present reasoning and regulations behind a bat being accepted or rejected by other organizations.

Although not unanimous, these motions all show an open mind by team reps regarding competitiveness across the league and safety of players. It will be quite a change from the norm, but I trust we will be able to do so in good spirit.

Field conditions...

On several - no, many - occasions last season, bad weather played havoc with our games. Unfortunately we live in the Maritimes! Although the City recreation department's recorded information line has always been the deciding factor, there were several occasions when a great deal of rain or fog moved in after the City had made its decision. It was decided that the league president has the authority to cancel a game on account of poor field conditions up until game time & will make every effort to contact the affected teams immediately.

After the teams arrive the umpire, in consultation with the two managers, has the option of declaring a field unplayable. If at any time during the game the umpire feels the field conditions are worsening, he is to consult with the managers and decide whether to continue playing or cancel the game. If there is a difference of opinion between the two managers, the umpire is to err on the side of caution and stop the game.

Please remember that these are legitimate safety concerns, and closing a field is for the benefit of your players.