

NEWCASTLE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Record of Meeting



MEETING TITLE:		2022 Season Review	
MEETING LOCATION:	Softball Clubrooms, Stevenson Ave, Mayfield.	MEETING DATE:	Wednesday, 7 Dec 2022
		MEETING START:	19:00
		MEETING END:	20:45
CHAIRPERSON:	Travers Searle	RECORDED BY:	Maxine Poole
ATTENDEES:	Travers Searle <i>NBA</i> Percy Damian <i>Lake Camels</i> Maxine Poole <i>NBA – Secretary</i> Phil Davies <i>Life Member /</i> Scott Foster <i>NBA – Treasurer</i> <i>White Sox</i> Ian Hook <i>NBA / Life Member</i> Arran Owen <i>White Sox</i> Brian Sullivan <i>NBA</i> Christina Frost <i>Toronto</i> Jason Picot <i>NBA</i> Brenden Randle <i>Toronto</i> Megan Doudle <i>NBA</i> Joshua Voigt <i>Boomerangs</i> Stephen Pack <i>Belmont</i> Richard Campbell <i>Boomerangs</i> Hajime Ishii <i>Bemont</i> Aaron Guile <i>Woodberry</i> John Mossop <i>Life Member /</i> Sean Doudle <i>Phoenix</i> <i>Boomerangs</i> Josh van Eynde <i>Toronto</i>		
APOLOGIES:	Duane Harrison, Fiona Hinton-Rodgers, Bill Marshall, Wayne Hall.		

AGENDA:	
1	Review of 2022 Season
2	Initial plans for 2023 Season
3	Review of (draft) proposed By-Law updates
4	Club-raised discussion points

1 REVIEW OF 2022 SEASON

Travers Searle Chaired the meeting in absence of Duane Harrison.

In Summary:

Without rehashing Duane’s AGM speech in detail, I would like to personally thank everyone involved with their clubs, as it was a difficult year for our volunteers. We are all looking towards a successful “normal” 2023 season.

The intent of tonight’s meeting is to briefly summarise our observations from the 2022 season, and provide a forum for clubs to comment on potential improvements as well. We intend to also review a number of proposed By-Law updates. These are largely proposed to increase simplicity and remove confusions identified throughout the season.

A key item we note from the season just gone is that umpire resourcing is an increasingly difficult task. We are aware that the provision of official umpires is unlikely to improve for the 2023 season and we will be reliant on volunteer umpires for our competition to be successful. Our observations included that volunteer umpires need to be supported in many ways. These can include simplicity of our rules, and supporting the umpires when player / coach indiscretions occur.

NEWCASTLE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Record of Meeting



2 INITIAL PLANS FOR THE 2023 SEASON

At this stage, the intent is for a Season start of April 1st, 2023. The following week will be Easter and no games will be held.

Pre-Season events are proposed:

- Season Launch
- Presidents Meeting
- Coaches Meeting

It was also discussed during the meeting that umpire information seasons would be welcomed. These seasons could be held as per a usual accreditation course, even if the facilitators do not have the authority to provide the accreditation certificate. This would increase the knowledge base of our volunteer umpires, who we know are going to be asked to assist, accredited or not.

3 PROPOSED BY-LAW UPDATES

A summary of proposed By Law updates has been attached to the meeting minutes.

It is noted that the proposed updates are not final and provided for discussion only. The NBA Board intends to review with consideration to club feedback and the interests of the greater NBA competition prior to finalisation.

The new By-laws will be distributed and placed on website once completed, and further discussed at the Coaches / Presidents Meetings

4 CLUB RAISED DISCUSSION POINTS

The following topics were raised by Clubs for discussion and consideration for the upcoming seasons.

4.1 LAKE CAMELS

Proposed:

- A '7 runs over the plate' rule (and no mercy rule) for AAA division.

Feedback:

- *Clubs generally in favour of 6-7 run rule.*
- *NBA is intending to implement a 6-run across the plate rule for Minor League. This will ensure consistency with Junior rules and therefore simplify for volunteer umpires.*

Proposed:

- To allow, at least for AAA division, as injury replacements; either a player who has already been substituted out of the game, or a player graded one grade above the grade in which the injury occurs, PROVIDED that, in either case the injury replacement cannot bat or pitch.

Feedback

- *No objections from clubs, provided the replacement cannot form any part of the battery, preferably in the outfield and is considered an automatic out (at the discretion of the opposing team).*

4.2 PHOENIX

Proposed:

NEWCASTLE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Record of Meeting



- Can we look at using different balls than using HS1010 as they are high schools balls unsuitable for grade teams. This was brought up at the start of season 2022. We were told this would be reviewed before balls were purchased for season 2023.

Feedback

- *The NBA Board have looked at Rawlings, Wilson and Greatrex prices. The Board will talk to our sponsor Redstitches and advise on suitable balls for the new year.*

4.3 BOOMERANGS

Query:

- Will the updated DH rule (Ohtani Rule) be implemented in 2023 as it has become an official baseball rule.
 - Update allows a pitcher who bats for himself to stay in a game as the designated hitter when he is finished pitching

Feedback:

- *The intent is for the DH rule to be included for the 2023 Season. The rule will be clarified for members not familiar new allowances.*

Query:

- Can a discussion be raised on swapping majors to Saturday and AAA to Sunday (Minor League can be either day)
 - It seems strange why the premier grade often plays on a diamond that has seen around 5 games prior to them taking the field.
 - Eliminate those players who are still able to play higher grades but choose to play Saturdays because it is convenient.
 - Allow for more social events following the higher grades rather than everyone going home to prepare for the Monday.
 - Good step forward towards getting Central Coast integrated as part of our competition as they play Saturdays.
 - Senior League players who can play AAA will not have to scramble to other fields following their games.

Feedback:

- *Clubs generally not in favour of this proposal, and the NBA Board is of the opinion this is not in the best interests of the greater Competition as Juniors will be further impacted.*

Proposed

- Mercy Rule Segregation
 - Many players have complained about the game having to be continued when a team is being significantly outscored.
 - The need for segregated mercy rules is important.
 - Minor League/AAA - 15 after 3, 10 after 5.
 - Major League - 15 after 5, 10 after 7
 - Alternatively minor league could have a specific rules to keep games fair

NEWCASTLE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Record of Meeting



- Certain number of runs across the plate per inning.
- Put in writing that if a team is in front by 10 runs or more and they steal they are automatically out.

Feedback:

- *The NBA Board is of the opinion that mercy rules in a timed game are not in the best interests of the greater competition.*
- *A runs-per-innings rule has been proposed for Minor League.*
- *Clubs are reminded that they may declare at any point in their batting inning.*

Proposed

- More NBA Support for Junior Club Coaches
 - This season (especially in Little League) it seemed like a lot of the coaches didn't know what rules were enforced or not.
 - Could we have something like a Junior Coaches summary meeting prior to season (easy via zoom and record it)
 - In the past there has been an A4 sheet summary of the rules for junior team coaches

Feedback:

- *Noted. The NBA acknowledges the previous season was difficult with many stop starts and hence the staged approach to rules in little league could have been improved upon.*
- *Clubs were reminded that the junior rules are provided on the website and included within the By Laws.*
- *The NBA intends to improve the communication of Junior Requirements, but also reinforces the need for clubs to support their Coaches and ensure they understand the Junior rules also.*
- *A clearer pitch count tracking sheet will be made available on the website for information.*

Proposed

- Dedicated NBA person to Major League Games to enforce things like code of conduct/by-law questions
 - Throughout the year there was a bit of behaviour that was not appropriate but not necessarily ejectionable.
 - If there was someone there to give citations out for players/spectators the game would benefit.

Feedback:

- *The NBA Board informs this is not feasible to implement.*
- *Any member of the baseball community may notify of an incident via their Cub Secretary. Additionally, all Club committee members, particularly the Secretary and Presidents, are encouraged to report incidents as they arise. The Board can only act of what is observed and when they are informed.*
- *Clubs additionally have the responsibility to manage their member behaviours.*

Proposed

- Club component to come from GameDay (no need to charge clubs a cost)
 - This is an easy thing to do with Mel from BNSW meaning that the NBA wouldn't need to invoice the clubs for their team but would get a small fee that comes directly from the players.

NEWCASTLE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Record of Meeting



Feedback:

- *The NBA Board does not intend to implement this for the 2023.*
- *It may be reviewed in future seasons when resourcing allows. In the interim, the current arrangement will apply which benefits the playing base.*

Proposed

- Need to improve how to end a timed game.
 - All games should be able to finish an inning once started, so we would like to see a rule similar to the Sydney State League be enforced.
 - Where for a 2 hour game no new inning is to be started after 110 mins from the scheduled start time.
 - If an inning is started it can be completed up until the scheduled start time of the following fixture.
 - Eliminate the specific number of runs as it causes confusion.

Feedback:

- *Discussed during By-Law proposals.*
- *The NBA Board proposes that a timed game will finish at the competition of the allocated time.*
 - *i.e. No further time will be granted beyond the scheduled duration.*
 - *This also assists umpire availability.*

Proposed

- Gradings
 - We believe that the gradings should be public knowledge, whether this is a public spreadsheet accessible on the website. There's no reason why it cannot be public knowledge and will eliminate any confusion as to if someone is eligible to play in certain grades.

Feedback:

- *The NBA does not agree gradings should be public knowledge.*
 - *The NBA acknowledged grading management can be improved upon for the upcoming season and intends to both monitor and provide better support to Clubs throughout the season.*
 - *It was noted that Clubs are responsible for maintaining their own Club gradings throughout the year. Should a significant concern arise with another Club, they may lodge an appeal to the NBA.*

Proposed

- Minimum Fresh Players
 - We would like to see that the highest grade on the day (most importantly 1st grade) should start the game with a team of fresh players (eg. minimum of 7) quite often higher quality players are playing 2 games while players are sitting on the bench and then only half a team of players warm up for the higher grade. We do understand that numbers sometimes are difficult but it saves the same 8 players playing both grades.

Feedback

- *The NBA Board does not consider this enforceable, nor in the best interests of our competition*

NEWCASTLE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

Record of Meeting



- *Clubs are responsible for managing player participation from a fatigue, fairness and grading perspective.*

Proposed

- By-Laws Breaches
 - We would like to see that more explanation into bylaw breaches and the penalties enforced. We don't understand the deliberation process for the penalties that can be enforced on a case by case basis. They either need specific penalties that have no room for arguments or have a process for appeal.

Feedback

- *The NBA Board notes that not all matters have an explicit penalty assigned in the By-Laws and on occasion, new incidents arise that are unexpected. As such, the NBA seeks to apply the most relevant penalty based on precedent, prescribed penalties and the incident itself.*
- *The NBA notes that they will always endeavour to explain the thought process behind the sanction.*

Proposed

- NBA Minutes
 - We request that the NBA meeting minutes be passed onto the clubs or posted to the website.
 - As the controlling body over the association, items discussed should be accessible by any member of the association. On the occasion that a club representative is not present at the meeting any relevant points that affect the association are often not communicated directly or we find out on Facebook.

Feedback

- A sanitised version will be posted on website.
- It is noted that actions arising from Minutes are provided to Club Secretaries and Clubs are responsible for forwarding this information to their members also.

4.4 OTHER CLUBS

No further discussion points were raised by the other Clubs in attendance.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

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