

**Minutes of Department of New Hampshire Baseball
Committee Meeting of
November 6, 2022 - Sweeney Post #2**

Chairman Rick Harvey called the meeting to order at 9:33 and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

In attendance were Chairman Rick Harvey, Vice Chair Jim Blake (remotely), Committee Members Brian LeVeille, Gary Wayman, Pete St. Pierre, Steve Drescher, Craig Walfield, Dan Griswold, Wayne Perra, and Steve Hernandez. Also present were Department Commander Charlie Arkwell, PDC x2 Bill Roy, Mike Henzley from Merrimack, Loren Foxx from Bedford, Nate Craigue from Concord, and DJ Johnson from Berlin.

Umpire-in-Chief Steve Drescher reported on issues from the state tournaments. He may reduce the umpire roster for such playoff games as there were issues with mechanics involving 3-man crews. Some were inexperienced working a 3-man and were out-of-position at times as a result.

He also made a request for fee increases due to higher gas prices and larger areas to cover. After consideration, the Committee voted to adopt these new fees for 2023:

Seniors: \$90 per umpire per game

Juniors: \$80 per umpire per game

Prep: \$70 per umpire per game

Discussion began on adding 9 new teams to our program. The Committee met privately with Loren Foxx of Bedford and Mike Henzley of Merrimack to assess the impact on other teams of adding a Bedford Senior team back into the fold.

Outgoing Junior Coach Foxx outlined the growth of the Bedford Legion program since its Senior team left after winning the regional tournament several years ago. It added a Prep team to its successful Junior program in 2022 and wants to add a Senior team this year. It will consist of just Bedford kids who will play Legion baseball exclusively---no outside travel teams will be involved. Coach Foxx mentioned the player development and economic advantages of high school players growing in the game together during the summer while acknowledging that they will lose out on a few good players as a result. They have 14 players committed for 2023 right now.

Coach Henzley reviewed his Merrimack program and the goal of having teams in all three divisions next year. He had 14 Senior players in 2022 and said that it's in doubt that he will have enough to have one in 2023 if Bedford is added. He typically has had 2-3 players from Bedford in recent years along with some from other schools outside of Merrimack.

After committing that Wilton/Lyndeborough players will automatically belong to Merrimack, the Committee voted unanimously to add the Bedford Senior team to our program. Merrimack will have 76's for all such players and they will not have to be signed by Bedford. For the year 2023, Merrimack will be allowed to keep players from Bedford who had committed to playing for Merrimack before Bedford announced their request of 2023 to add a senior team.

After discussing the impact on Laconia of adding a Senior team in Plymouth, the Committee unanimously voted to add 9 new teams as follows:

Senior A-Bedford and Plymouth
Senior B-Derry

Junior B-Londonderry and Rochester

Prep-Londonderry, Merrimack, Rochester, and Conway

We should also know very soon if Lebanon will add a second Prep team next year.

Minutes of our last meeting on March 13, 2022, were reviewed and approved.

The Committee then went over the very successful 2022 seasons of each division and discussed the specifics of each for 2023---

Senior: Regular season will run from Monday, June 12 to Saturday, July 15
18 teams in two 9-team districts---16-game district schedule
State Tournament at Holman Stadium from July 21-25

Junior: Regular season from Monday, June 12 to Saturday, July 22
16 teams in two 8-team districts---schedule to be drawn up later
State Tournament at Gill Stadium from July 28 to August 1

Prep: Regular Season from Wednesday, May 31 to Wednesday, August 2
11 teams (may expand to 12)---schedule to be discussed later
State Tournament at Robbie Mills Sports Complex in Laconia from August 7-10

Showcase: Tuesday, July 18 at Holman Stadium
As suggested by the Head Coach at Castleton Univ. in Vermont, event will change to the "Pro Style" format.

With all these tournaments and events, the Committee discussed the need for more volunteers to help run them. We don't have enough members to run them all ourselves and will be asking for help in official scoring, tracking pitch counts, returning foul balls, running a scoreboard, collecting admissions, and a myriad of other things required to successfully manage them. We will ask for volunteers in advance of each tournament.

In the likely event that Sweeney hosts a Regional Tournament in 2024 or 25, it will be a real challenge for us to squeeze in all our tournaments. We will need more volunteers to help out and may need to start some tournaments in mid-week.

Items discussed at the National Baseball Committee Meeting were reviewed. The national budget was cut by \$110,000 resulting in a \$50 per team increase in the national fee. Adding a 13U level is a possibility. Here in NH, we may encourage the Cal Ripken organization to enter their all-star tournament teams in a Legion summer league after their major tournaments are over. This would be an alternative to them participating in tournaments in places like Youngsville, Plaistow, etc.

We have hired Julie Lavigne to be our Social Media Director. Julia comes from Bedford, NH and she is a senior marketing major at SNHU and plans to attend grad school at SNHU after her graduation. Julia is a professed baseball fanatic. She comes from a baseball family. Her older brother Grant was drafted by the Colorado Rockies in 2018. He reached the AA level this year in that organization and was invited to play in the Arizona Fall Ball league this fall. In 2022, her brother Kyle graduated from Bedford H.S. and is committed to play college baseball at Austin Peay State. Julia has all the skills we were looking for when we posted this position. She is excited to start working and I am excited to have her on board to start this new venture for our program. We will pay her as a Department employee and will raise our state fee to \$50 per team to cover this cost.

New Forfeit Rule: we will discuss and implement at next spring's meeting to take effect immediately. In brief, fines will be eliminated for a forfeit, but teams will have to cover the umpire costs involved. Teams also will no longer be eliminated from the program for 3 or more forfeits in a season.

Background Checks and Awareness Training: all volunteers will have to go through both every year through the Protect Youth Sports program. Steve Hernandez manages all of this.

New Legion Patches for uniform tops and coach's pullovers will be introduced in 2023. Teams will have a one-year grandfather with the old patches if necessary. Several teams wore no patches at all last year. It is a rule that they must be worn.

New roster deadline for submission to National will be June 22 (with a June 25 drop dead date).

Game Changer Classic will be the official scoring device starting in 2023. It will be mandatory for all teams to use it.

A moment of silence was observed for those we lost this year, particularly for coach Rick Mercier from Berlin and Gary Pomeroy from Newmarket.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:41.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Blake, Vice Chairman