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30th Annual WFBL Winter Talks Meeting Minutes

February 25th, 2024

Attendees: PWR, WRM, RMF, PIT, DUR, FOS, SOX, HIK

1. Check Presentations

2023 League Fees: $(\$50 \times 12) = \600

2023 League Expenses: $(\$150 \text{ website}) + (\$12 \text{ engraving}) + (\$18 \text{ ball}) = \$180$

2023 Prize Money: $\$600 - \$180 = \$420$

Noted some slight increases in payouts, due to reduced cost of the baseball and engraving.

		<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2011</u>
3 rd Runner Up	Durham Indians (Dennis Close) 2023 Avent Division Champions (15-8)	\$50	\$50	\$40
2 nd Runner Up	Power Rangers (Adam Brake) 2023 Keatts Division (16-7)	\$72	\$71	\$52
1 st Runner Up	Ellicott City Black Sox (Chip Kiel) 2023 Doeren Division Champions (16-7)	\$116	\$113	\$76
League Champion	Spivey's Corner Knockouts (Daniel Warren) 2023 Wild Card Winner (15-8)	\$182	\$176	\$112

2. Trophy Presentation (will be held at the Draft, due to SCK not being present)

2023 Season in Review

- Both the Ellicott City Black Sox and Durham Indians returned to the playoffs again this season. The Durham Indians have now made the playoffs the past three seasons in a row, which included having won the league in 2022.
- With their first championship, the Spivey's Corner Knockouts became the 9th active franchise with a league title. This was the *third* consecutive season the Wild Card Winner has won the League Title.
- *Trending Up:* Our League Champion Spivey's Corner Knockouts proved to be the most improved team in 2023 by far, netting an unprecedented 11 more wins in 2023 over the previous season. Keatts Division Champion Power Rangers and Doeren Division Champion Ellicott City Black Sox both improved by 4 and 3 wins respectively over their previous campaigns.
- *Trending Down:* 2022 Keatts Division Champ and 4x WFBL Champion Raleigh Middle Fingers nearly hit rock bottom, imploding to a tune of 13 more losses than in their previous season. Fostoria Screwballs and Hickory Scorpions had 8 and 5 fewer wins respectively than they had in 2022.
- Other Trends
 - 17 draft picks traded in 2023 (down 3 from '22) – most active was Fostoria Screwballs (7 to), Fuquay Nine (4 to), Spivey's Corner (3 away, 1 to), and Ellicott City (4 away)
 - 92% (11/12) of the league either traded away or received a draft pick in '23 (down from 100% in '22).
 - 83% (10/12) participation in the 2023 Minor League Draft (unchanged from '22)
 - 75% (9/12) participation in the 2023 Winter Talks (down from 92% in '22)
- A Summer Talks event was not held in 2023.
- All 2023 3rd-year protectees except Max Muncy (HIK) were either traded away or dropped during the 2023 season.
- The Raleigh Middle Fingers and Ball Hawks both continued their remarkable 26-year streaks of never having won a wild card, in spite of their combined 16 division titles and 6 WFBL championships, including 4 of the last 7 league titles. 29 wild cards have been won in the history of the league, none by either of them. In fact, the two teams have combined to finish 2nd in their division only FIVE times. By contrast, FUQ has won the wild card 5 times in just 14 seasons (1 division title, 2 Championships).

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3. Draft Location & Date

Location

- Cary? - Yes
- Mike's house? - yes

Date

- MLB Opening Day is Thursday, March 28th.
- Friday, March 22nd, Saturday, March 23rd, Sunday, March 24th?
 - Saturday, March 23rd
- What time?
 - 6:00pm

4. Important Dates

The official WFBL Player Price Guide must be released no later than 2 weeks prior to the draft. Ideally, it should be released 2 weeks prior to when protection lists are due (which would be 3 weeks prior to the draft, since protection lists are typically due one week before the draft).

Player Price Guide Released	<i>Saturday, March 8, 2024</i>
Protected Lists Due	<i>Saturday, March 15, 2024</i>
Schedule Released	<i>Monday, March 25, 2024</i>
29 th Annual WFBL Draft	<i>Saturday, March 23, 2024</i>
MLB Opening Day	<i>Thursday, March 28, 2024</i>
Initial Roster Transaction Requests Due	<i>Friday, April 12, 2024 (email in by 10pm)</i>
Minor League Draft	<i>Sunday, April 21, 2024 (online at 9pm)</i>
Expanded Rosters	<i>Monday, August 19, 2024</i>
Trade/Transaction Deadline	<i>Monday, August 26, 2024</i>
Playoffs Begin	<i>Monday, September 9, 2024</i>

5. League Software

Cost for CBSsports.com remains \$149.99 as the "Early Bird Special" (deadline is Feb 8th)

6. Draft

- Online draft board: expect only minor improvements in the 22nd installment of our homegrown online draft software. URL for WFBL is <https://wfbl.acbrake.org>
- Projector?

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7. Minor League Draft

For the past 15 years now, we have held the minor league draft online all in one night. This alleviates issues where a player lost minor league draft eligibility during the course of the draft. Owners who cannot be available have the opportunity to submit a list.

8. Open Forum

- a) There was some confusion over initial roster transactions. Deadline is still Friday 10pm even if CBS sends out email about starting it earlier/later. Those are automated emails so I can't control them.
- b) During the draft, a player who had been protected for 3 consecutive season was traded away. That player was then re-acquired later that same season (well after the 28-day requirement set forth by rule 9.8). The question arose as to whether or not his protection status was reset. The commissioner and rules committee said "no". A player cannot be protected for more than 3 consecutive years (rule 12.4), and protection status is reset if a player is dropped (rule 12.7).
 - a. No discussion needed.
- c) Our rules say that once a minor league player qualifies at a position (20+ games for position players, 5+ games for pitchers), they must be called up or dropped with 1 week. Chip thinks 20 games for position players is too few and suggests an increase to 25 or 30 games. No guidance was provided for pitchers.
 - a. No problem identified. Maybe address again next year.
- d) Our constitution is ambiguous at best, misleading and flat-out inaccurate at worst with regards to the wording on pitcher eligibility, how it's gained, and where that player can be used in the lineup. The constitution says a player cannot lose eligibility once the season, but in the case of some pitchers, when an SP gains RP-eligibility, or when an RP gains SP-eligibility, they effectively "lose" the ability to be used in a particular roster spot (i.e. SP-only, or RP-only), and are only able to be used in the SP/RP (denoted as "P" in CBS) roster position. An amendment to the constitution allows a player to be reclassified having pitcher as a starter or reliever in 10 consecutive appearances. In week 21 last season, an owner tried to use a player in SP-only roster slot that had 17 relief appearances that season and had not yet started 10 consecutive games. This player was deemed ineligible by the Commissioner and upheld by the Rules Committee.
 - a. Issue 1: The constitution doesn't specifically say that pitchers can gain eligibility after the season starts. Rule 4.5 only specifies batters. (I believe this is an error in the document as the settings in CBS have not changed since 2001.)
 - b. Issue 2: The constitution uses Roster positions and Eligibility interchangeably and inconsistently, resulting in confusion.
 - c. Issue 3: There are so many addendums and rules regarding reclassification that it has become complex, vague and misleading. This could all be simplified by saying
 - i. SP-eligibility is 5+ GS last season or current season
 - ii. RP-eligibility is 5+ G-GS last season or current season
 - iii. SP roster slot is no-longer defined as "pure" or SP-only, rather SP-eligible
 - iv. RP roster slot is no-longer defined as "pure" or RP-only, rather RP-eligible
 - v. The "swing" (SP/RP) term simply becomes P (any pitcher)
 - d. Issue 4: Position eligibility vs. Roster position – For position players you are eligible at a roster position if you have eligibility (regardless of other position eligibilities). For roster positions (SP) and (RP), a player must only have eligibility at that position (and no others). This is by design, but it's also a point of confusion and not automatically enforced by CBS.
 - i. **Motion: Change pitcher eligibility rule to 5 games for SP, and 15 for RP, and cannot lose eligibility. Can gain eligibility during the season. Still 3 SP, 1 RP, and one SP/RP (P), and anyone eligible for SP or RP can play the P position. Eligible for neither can only play at the P position.**
 1. **Vote: 8 for (Andrew voted remotely), one no vote (Jeremy – rules are for chumps)**

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- e) The constitution is silent on how it should be handled if a player is deemed ineligible at a position after the week has started. In the past, if that player has not yet played in a game, they have been allowed to replace that player with someone else who has not yet played who is eligible. What should be the policy if 1) the player in question has already played, 2) no player is available to replace the ineligible player? *Note: this issue would become moot if we adopt software-enforced eligibility rules.*
 - a. Proposals:
 - i. Players not meeting 20 game eligibility are DH only (similar to P rule change above) OR Players gaining eligibility will ADD to their eligibility.
 - 1. No motion to change.
 - ii. **Remove player for that week (or allow to replace with someone who hasn't played that week yet)** OR ignore and let them "get away with it"?
 - 1. **Vote 7 for, one no vote (Jeremy – rules are for chumps)**
 - f) Others?

9. Constitution Review

We probably need to appoint a small committee to work on the wording of our intent and send it out for ratification prior to the draft.

No proposal – write ups for new rules will be reviewed by the entire league anyway.

10. Rules Committee Nominations and Elections

Chris was elected to serve 2-year term beginning in 2022. Andrew and Dennis C. were elected to serve a 2-year term beginning in 2023. So, we need 1 new guy to replace Chris to serve a 2-year term beginning in 2024.

Dennis Welly elected (7 for, one no vote)

11. Draft Lottery

2 "chances" – Durham Indians, Power Rangers, Ellicott City Black Sox, Spivey's Corner Knockouts
4 "chances" – All other teams

1. Fuquay Nine (Doeren)
2. Raleigh Middle Fingers (Avent)
3. Fostoria Screwballs (Doeren)
4. Power Rangers (Keatts)
5. Hickory Scorpions (Avent)
6. Pittsburgh Brahma Bulls (Keatts)
7. Ellicott City Black Sox (Doeren)
8. Ball Hawks (Avent)
9. Spivey's Corner Knockouts (Keatts)
10. West Raleigh Moundchargers (Doeren)
11. Durham Indians (Avent)
12. Mauer Patch Kids (Keatts)

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12. Division Alignment

Defending Division Champs: Durham Indians (Avent), Power Rangers (Keatts), Ellicott City Black Sox (Doeren)

Doeren

Fuquay Nine

Fostoria Screwballs

Ellicott City Black Sox

West Raleigh Moundchargers

Avent

Raleigh Middle Fingers

Hickory Scorpions

Ball Hawks

Durham Indians

Keatts

Power Rangers

Pittsburgh Brahma Bulls

Spivey's Corner Knockouts

Mauer Patch Kids