



# 31<sup>st</sup> Annual WFBL Winter Talks

February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

- Attendees: Adam (C), Thomas (VC), Keith, Matt, Chris, Mike, Nolan, Daniel, Chip
- Check Presentations

2024 League Fees: (\$50 x 12) = \$600

2024 League Expenses: (\$150 website) + (\$12 engraving) + (\$21 ball) = \$183

2024 Prize Money: \$600 - \$183 = \$417

		<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Runner Up	Power Rangers (Adam Brake) 2024 Keatts Division Champions (16-7)	\$50	\$50	\$50
2 <sup>nd</sup> Runner Up	Pittsburgh Brahma Bulls (Mike Rudd) 2024 Wild Card Winner (14-9)	\$71	\$72	\$71
1 <sup>st</sup> Runner Up	Fostoria Screwballs (Dennis Welly) 2024 Doeren Division Champions (13-10)	\$115	\$116	\$113
League Champion	Raleigh Middle Fingers (Thomas Lipps) 2024 Avent Division Champions (17-6)	\$181	\$182	\$176

### 3. Trophy Presentation

#### 2024 Season in Review

- After a strong 21-season history, the West Raleigh Moundchargers hung up their virtual cleats. The league welcomed in the New Hill Barrelmen. After a strong 7-3 start, the newcomers stumbled a bit, but still managed to finish with a respectable 12-11 record, narrowly missing the playoffs in their inaugural season.
- The Power Rangers were the only team to return to the playoffs on 2024.
- The Raleigh Middle Fingers won their fifth league title. It took them 15 years to win their first and now they've won four of the past eight.
- All four playoff teams were top 5 in *both* hitting and pitching totals. Our champion ranked #1 overall in pitching, and #3 overall in batting.
- For the 18<sup>th</sup> time in the past 19 seasons, no team managed 20+ wins. The only team with 20+ wins since 2004 was the 2018 "Juggernaut" Pittsburgh Brahma Bulls (who ultimately lost to the eventual NL MVP Christian Yelich's Ball Hawks in the championship). This was the first time since 2001 our league champion had more than 16 regular season wins.
- Trending Up:* Our League Champion Raleigh Middle Fingers was easily the most improved team in 2024 by far, netting an unprecedented 13 more wins in 2024 over the previous season (matching their win total from 2022). Doeren Division Champion Fostoria Screwballs improved by 6 wins over their previous campaign.
- Trending Down:* 2023 WFBL Champion Spivey's Corner Knockouts nearly hit rock bottom, imploding to a tune of 12 more losses than in their previous season. 2023 Avent Division Champion Durham Indians had 7 fewer wins than they had in 2023. Their defense cost them dearly, giving up a league-leading 4389.3 points against.
- Other Trends
  - 17 draft picks traded in 2024 (same amount in '23) – most active was Spivey's Corner (8 to, 3 away) and Ellicott City (4 to, 1 away)
  - 92% (11/12) of the league either traded away or received a draft pick in '24 (same as in '23).
  - 92% (11/12) participation in the 2024 Minor League Draft (up from 83% in '23)
  - 75% (8/12) participation in the 2024 Winter Talks (down from 83% in '23)
- A Summer Talks event was not held in 2024.
- All 2024 3<sup>rd</sup>-year protectees were either traded away or dropped during the 2024 season.

- The Raleigh Middle Fingers and Ball Hawks both continued their remarkable 27-year streaks of never having won a wild card, in spite of their combined 17 division titles and 7 WFBL championships, including 5 of the last 8 league titles. 30 wild cards have been won in the history of the league, none by either of them.
- Scoring last season in the WFBL was at an all-time low! Avg only 171.9 ppg, down from 180.0 in 2023, beating the previous record set in 2021 of 173.4 ppg. This continues a trend since the pandemic... the 4 lowest scoring seasons of all-time have all occurred in the last 4 years
- Only ONE team has breached the 300 pt barrier since the pandemic, outside of week 1 (Fostoria, 303.7, 2022 Week 6)
- Spivey's season last year was epically bad... T2nd fewest wins (3), T2 most losses (20), T2 lowest winning pct (.130) (all for the 2nd time - 2021), T3 most games back (13, for their 3rd time - 21 & 22), T5 worst division record (2-13, also 21 & 22)
- Defense reigns in the WFBL... Durham could not take advantage of the 3rd fewest points against of all-time (3781.2), as they scored the lowest in the league last season (3357.5). This is the 2nd time in the last 4 years that Durham has had the fewest points against, with 2021 setting the all-time league record of 3734.8. Raleigh also had the 5th fewest points against of all-time this season (3810.2). The top 5 fewest points against have all occurred in the last 4 years.

#### 4. Draft Location & Date

##### Location

- Hickory?
- Matt's house? -Yes
  - Daniel has more flexibility if in Raleigh area

##### Date

- MLB Opening Day is Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup> (No, Matt can't do), Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> (No),
  - Sunday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>? @ 2:30pm
  - Possible March 29 or 30?
  - Adam will add to new Doodle
- What time?

#### 5. 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	Sunday, March 9 (if March 23)
Protected Lists Due	Sunday, March 16
Schedule Released	After the draft
29 <sup>th</sup> Annual WFBL Draft	See above for Doodle dates
MLB Opening Day	Thursday, March 27, 2025
Initial Roster Transaction Requests Due	Friday, April 11, 2025 (email in by 10pm)
Minor League Draft	Sunday, April 20, 2025 (online at 8pm)
Expanded Rosters	Monday, August 18, 2025
Trade/Transaction Deadline	Monday, August 25, 2025
Playoffs Begin	Monday, September 8, 2025

#### 6. League Software

Cost for CBSSports.com remains \$149.99 as the "Early Bird Special" (deadline is Feb 8<sup>th</sup>)

## 7. Draft

- Online draft board: expect only minor improvements in the 23<sup>rd</sup> installment of our homegrown online draft software. URL for WFBL is <https://wflb.acbrake.org>
- Projector?

## 8. Minor League Draft

For the past 16 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.

## 9. Open Forum

- In 2020, MLB changed from 25-man roster to 26-man roster. Maybe we should change our roster max from 25 to 26 (14 active, 12 reserve), and then expand to 28 to be consistent with MLB?
  - No vote
- Last year we implemented 5 games for SP eligibility and 15 games for RP eligibility, and pitchers would no longer “lose” eligibility. We lost the concept of SP-only, and RP-only. Anyone eligible as an SP can be used in the SP slot. Likewise with RP. Was there any confusion with the new rule? Did it help? Just looking for feedback here.
  - All good
- In 2022, we changed the rules such that the salary of a minor league player who is called up during the season would be capped at \$3, regardless of their assigned value to begin the season. Last year, this rule applied to Jackson Holliday (\$7) and Jackson Merrill (\$4).
  - All good
- Ball Hawks would like to propose/discuss an incentive for non-playoff teams to stay engaged and try to compete even when it’s clear they won’t make the playoffs. Options could include something next-year-lottery-chance based, compensation pick based or monetary-based. Thoughts?
  - Proposal: 4-team playoff between seeds 5-8. Winner steals \$5 of protection money from the last place team (12<sup>th</sup> place).
  - Could also have a 4-team playoff with seeds 9-12 to determine the last place finisher.
    - Proposal: Mike
    - 2<sup>nd</sup>? Chris
    - Vote: 9-0 (plus 2 supposed “proxy” votes) Approved
- Others?
  - Proposal to raise entry fee to \$70 (Matt)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>? Adam
  - Vote 8-1 (plus 2 supposed “proxy” votes) Approved (Thomas voted no)

## 10. Constitution Review

## 11. Rules Committee Nominations and Elections

Andrew and Dennis C. were elected to serve a 2-year term beginning in 2023. Dennis W. was elected to serve a 2-year term beginning in 2024. So, we need 2 new guys to replace Andrew and Dennis C. to serve a 2-year term beginning in 2025. (Daniel, Nolan, Chip are the 3-longest tenured owners to have not served lately).

Nolan and Daniel – Nominated (Unanimous)

## 12. Draft Lottery

2 “chances” –Power Rangers, Pittsburgh Brahma Bulls, Fostoria Screwballs, Raleigh Middle Fingers

4 “chances” – All other teams

Draft Order:

1. Spivey’s Corner (Doeren)
2. Mauer Patch (Keatts)
3. Pittsburgh (Avent)
4. Ellicott City (Doeren)
5. Fuquay (Keatts)
6. New Hill (Avent)
7. Hickory (Keatts)
8. Fostoria (Doeren)
9. Ball Hawks (Avent)
10. Durham (Doeren)
11. Power Rangers (Keatts)
12. Raleigh (Avent)

## 13. Division Alignment

Defending Division Champs: Raleigh Middle Fingers (Avent), Power Rangers (Keatts), Fostoria Screwballs (Doeren)

### Doeren Division

Fostoria Screwballs

Spivey’s Corner Knockouts

Ellicott City Black Sox

Durham Indians

### Avent Division

Raleigh Middle Fingers

Ball Hawks

New Hill Barrellmen

Pittsburgh Braham Bulls

### Keatts Division

Power Rangers

Hickory Scorpions

Fuquay Nine

Mauer Patch Kids