District 2 Little League Meeting

January 14, 2025 *|* Amherst Public House, Meeting called to order by Steve DePalma at 6:35 pm

Attendance

**Towns In Attendance: Longmeadow BB, Chicopee, Northampton, Southampton, Belchertown, Westfield, Amherst, Wilbraham SB**

**Steve DePalma, Ernie Fitzell, Marc Winer, Michelle Winer, Steve Elliot**

* **Trainings:** Make sure all volunteers are completing the Diamond Leadership (one time only) and Abuse Awareness trainings (new LL based training). Make sure you get a copy of the certificate to keep on file. A record of who has competed these can be found in the data center.
* **Constitution:** All constitutions must be updated. Names, dates, and information must be updated. Please follow the sample constitution as closely as possible from the Forms and Publications resource on LittleLeague.org
* **Dues:** Reminder to submit dues at or before the February meeting. Please get these to Ernie as soon as possible. Checks should be made out to Steve DePalma.
* **ASAPS**: Many of these have been completed. Please work on updating and submitting by February 1, 2025. Last year, we did get to 100%, but it was after the deadline, so we missed out on a kickback to the District and to each Charter. Please make sure these are all completed by the deadline so we can all benefit.
* **All Star Program Book:** Steve DePalma brought forth the discussion about a program book for 2025. Need to have as much information as possible before the season starts. Information that will have to be in June will be team rosters, coaches, pictures, and info about the above. It was suggested to have each town acquire 2 or more sponsors to help offset the cost of printing the books. Also available will be parent/family shout-outs for the players at a small cost. Once completed, the books will be available to each league to be sold at a set price (by the district) for a fund raiser opportunity. Timeline was handed out at the meeting. Will attached to email as well.
* **Registrations:** Just about everyone’s registrations are open, and some are almost ready to close. If there are any questions about anything with registrations, please reach out to Steve, Marc or Ernie. Waivers are needed for anyone that lies outside your charter boundaries, unless 7 years old or younger (or a sibling attached to such player). Please submit all waivers as soon as you are aware of these players. Do not wait until the end to submit.
* **Sports Connect:** All charters must use the Sports Connect website for registration starting in 2025. If you are not already on this platform, you must complete the setup as soon as possible to open registration. If you need help with anything, please reach out to Ernie/Marc with any questions.
* **Softball update:** Marc spoke about association umpires and to stress to them to follow LL rules. He will also check with West Springfield and Ludlow to see how they are doing. They have not made it to a meeting this Fall/Winter.
* **Baseball update:** Sports Connect must be used by all charters starting in 2025. Background checks must be done the JDP and also through MA. All volunteers must have both background checks done. If you need help with either, please reach out to Ernie/Marc. Ernie will be setting up a baseball meeting soon to collect information on the upcoming season.
* **Boundaries:** Reminder to check your boundaries on the Data Center to make sure they are 100% correct. If there are any discrepancies or changes that need to be made, please let Steve DePalma know ASAP.
* **Northern Expansion:** Steve D has reached out to some towns in the Northern part of the District. Greenfield and towns surrounding Deerfield have responded to him with interest in possibly joining LL this year or next. He will set up meetings with these regions soon to talk to them about details. If we get some towns up North, likely we will split into North and South divisions for travel divisions. More to come as details progress…
* **Combined leagues for Tournament play:** Two or more towns can combine to form a team during the regular season or tournament season to give more players the opportunity to play. If you cannot get enough players to form a team, please let us know, and we can work with surrounding towns to for a combined team. Please let us know as soon as you can so we can help with the waiver process.
* **Special Game Waivers:** Any non-little league teams that participate in tournament games need to have a waiver filled out and proof on insurance submitted to be a part of the tournament. These must be submitted to Steve DePalma before the tournament begins.
* **Rule Changes for 2025:** Significant rule changes are in the rules app, and were also handed out at the meeting. Highlights:
  + Extra inning runner will start on the first extra inning, not the second.
  + Mandatory play does not apply to Senior League for Districts.
  + Permits electronic devices for the coach/manager to communicate to the catcher directly, but the coach must be in the dugout at all times.

There was a handout passed at the meeting. Will be attached to the minutes.

* **Umpires:** Rule changes:
* Jewelry - any jewelry that will cause harm or cause distraction shall be removed before the game. Clarification to come soon.
* Bat alterations are not allowed (choke knobs, choke-up assists, thumb protectors).
* Equipment inspections are not required, but will be strongly suggested to all umpires that they offer this service before the game starts as a courtesy. If any equipment is found to be used illegally during the game, the penalty is manager and player immediate ejection.
* Helmets stickers are permitted provided such usage is not excessive, offensive, distracting or promotes inappropriate references (drugs, alcohol, profanity, etc.)

If you have any specific questions about rule changes or rules in general, please email Steve Elliot by Wednesday, January 22 so he can forward any concerns to Williamsport.

We will be starting clinics indoors in February. Dates are February 15 for Beginner clinic, March 1 for Refresher clinic, and March 29 for Mechanics clinic. Anyone 12 and older can become an umpire in our District. We are also looking into an alternate date for the Beginner Clinic due to multiple people not being able to attend February 15.

* Umpire Associations: If you use one of these, please make sure you forward the LL rules to the person in charge, and let them know that you expect all of the umpires to follow them at each game. There has been much confusion due to the lack of consistency from these umpires when it comes time for District play. Steve E. has no jurisdiction over these umpires, so it is the coaches/board members responsibility to make sure these umpires are following the LL rules correctly. Please offer the Associations to download the LL rulebook app (Free!) and also hand them the local rules for each division so that they can follow and enforce them correctly.
* Runners leaving early for baseball was brought up as a concern. If runners are caught leaving early, the play shall be reversed and the runner sent back at the discretion of the defensive manager. This is a very difficult thing to notice when there is only one umpire on an older level (Majors) baseball game, so it is strongly suggested to have a minimum of 2 umpires on all Majors and above baseball games.
* **CORI checks:** All volunteers must have background checks completed through the state of Massachusetts, and also through JDP with LL International. A reminder should go through the Sports Connect website when they sign up to volunteer with your league. MA state once need to be done separately and need the last 6 digits of their SS#, so be sure to get that from each volunteer.
* **Regulation 2:** Discussion about new regulation for players 7 and under:
* Players 7 and under can play in any location they prefer. Older siblings can also play in the same charter, as long as the younger tied-to sibling plays the entire season. No waiver is needed, but the older sibling must register at the same time with the same address.
* Players that are 7 get to choose where they play the following year. They can play in the charter that the played their 7 year old year, or in the town that they live/school in, as long as they have continuous and unbroken participation in the chosen charter.
* If you have any questions on this regulation, please reach out to Steve, Marc or Ernie.
* **New Business:**
* District dates were talked about and the Regional dates were handed out so that we complete District/Sectional/State play before these dates. Everything backs up from these dates.
* Starting games earlier this year was discussed to start early to mid April to give more time to complete the regular season and playoffs before District play needs to begin. This is all dependant on weather, but most towns are open to this idea.

**If you are willing to host the next meeting, or any other meeting in the future, please reach out to Steve D, Ernie, Marc or Michelle with a location. We are more than happy to move the meeting to a different location each month. Please think about hosting one meeting a year at least in your town. We need a space that will house at least 20 people in a relatively quiet place for up to 2 hours.**

**Please make every effort to send at least one representative from your league to each of these meetings. It is VITALLY IMPORTANT that everyone receives this information and is involved in the discussions. We need every town’s input and vote at these meetings so we can continue to move forward together as a District.**

**Next Meetings: February 6, 2025 at 6:30 PM. Location is TBD.**

**March 6, 2025 at 6:30 PM.**

**March 20, 2025 at 6:30 PM.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Submitted by Michelle Winer