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# Vermont Old-Timer Baseball News

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edited by Mike Wagner

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## Wood Bats To Be Required In 2003



At the midseason league meeting, held after the games of Sunday July 21, the teams voted to require wood or composite bats starting next year. This was the second time this issue was raised this year, and the vote of 11-4 matched the earlier vote.

The debate was orderly and to the point, and centered around specific issues: those in favor of going to wood bats argued that balls coming off metal bats are hazardous to the health of fielders, and that wood bats are traditional for baseball, and are increasingly used in other leagues at all levels.

Those in favor of staying with metal bats argued first that no problem existed that needed this solution, second that the national MSBL allows metal bats up to -5 differential, and third that there will be an increased cost for every team to maintain an adequate supply of bats.

## Are Two Umpires Better Than One?

The teams also discussed whether to require two umpires per game in the regular season. After considering the cost and the difficulty of getting one umpire at times, the teams voted to not require two umpires. However, the league has always encouraged the use of a second umpire, so if a team can afford the expense and make the arrangements, they should do so.

There was a vote in favor of requiring two umpires for playoff and championship games. As always, the home team should make the arrangements for umpires and baseballs, and the league will reimburse the cost to the home team.

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## Results of July 21 games

Killington 7, Jericho 2  
Lake Region 14, Winooski 10  
South Royalton 14, Champlain 0  
Morrisville 13, Northfield 0  
Newport 7, Montpelier 6  
Burlington 11, Caledonia 10  
Kingdom 10, Chelsea 3  
Mad River Valley, bye

## Standings

	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>PCT.</b>	<b>GB</b>
Killington	10	0	1.000	--
Morrisville	8	2	.800	2
South Royalton	7	2	.778	2.5
Champlain	6	4	.600	4
Mad River Valley	6	4	.600	4
Newport	6	4	.600	4
Chelsea	6	5	.545	4.5
Lake Region	5	5	.500	5
Winooski	5	5	.500	5
Jericho	4	5	.444	5.5
Montpelier	4	6	.400	6
Burlington	3	6	.333	6.5
Kingdom	3	7	.300	7
Northfield	1	10	.091	9.5
Caledonia	0	9	.000	9.5

## Games scheduled Sunday, July 28

Killington at Lake Region  
Burlington at South Royalton  
Champlain at Morrisville (Peoples Academy)  
Jericho at Mad River Valley (Harwood HS)  
Montpelier at Kingdom (North Country HS)  
Winooski at Caledonia (Lyndon State Coll.)  
Northfield at Newport (Gardner Park)  
Chelsea, bye

**The  
Catamounts  
are looking for  
a few good  
men**

**(but we're not  
too picky – old  
decrepit types  
can apply also)**



That's the **Vermont Catamounts**, our league's tournament team for the MSBL World Series. See page 5 for more information, including how to sign up.

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## Killington Sets New Record With 20 Game Regular Season Winning Streak

With their 7-2 win over Jericho on July 21, the Killington Summit Lodge Saints have now won 20 consecutive regular season games, breaking the record of 19 straight which was achieved by Lake Region in 1999-2000.

Since a 12-8 loss to South Royalton on May 20, 2001, in the team's third game of their inaugural season in the league, the only setback in their record was a post-season loss to Missisquoi in the 2001 state championship game.

During the winning streak the Saints have beaten every team in the league except Morrisville, whom they have yet to face.

This is how the streak developed:

Date	Opponent	W/L	Score	Streak
5/27/01	Chelsea	Won	20 - 0	1
6/10/01	Kingdom	Won	26 - 4	2
6/17/01	Montpelier	Won	11 - 3	3
6/24/01	Winooski	Won	5 - 1	4
7/ 8/01	Newport	Won	11 - 3	5
7/22/01	S.Royalton	Won	6 - 5	6
7/29/01	Montpelier	Won	6 - 2	7
8/ 5/01	Chelsea	Won	12 - 5	8
8/12/01	Jericho	Won	10 - 4	9
8/19/01	Lake Region	Won	17 - 8	10
(end of regular season for 2001)				
5/ 5/02	Burlington	Won	17 - 4	11
5/19/02	Montpelier	Won	8 - 5	12
5/26/02	Mad River	Won	10 - 2	13
6/ 2/02	Northfield	Won	21 - 3	14
6/ 9/02	Chelsea	Won	14 - 7	15
6/23/02	Champlain	Won	4 - 3	16
6/30/02	Caledonia	Won	16 - 1	17
7/ 7/02	Northfield	Won	14 - 2	18
7/14/02	Mad River	Won	7 - 1	19
7/21/02	Jericho	Won	7 - 2	20

Congratulations to manager Bill Bauer and the rest of the Killington Summit Lodge Saints team.



**Back row, left to right:** Dave Shortsleeve, Steve Wright, Jay Holzinger, Matt Deighan, Chris Alf, Chris Hughes, Ray Foley, Rick Root, Scott Matson

**Front row, left to right:** Lance Mills, John Clark, Clay Holzinger, Bill Bauer, Warren Green, Mike Rowe, Ken Dykeman, Greg Labella, Gary Mayer

## Format of Playoffs and Championship

*This information is based on league rule 17, which explains the format of the playoffs and championship:*

A player must play in at least 3 regular season games with one team in order to be eligible to play for that team in the playoffs and championship.

Teams will be seeded based on final standings from the regular season, using this order to break ties:

- 1- Complete won/loss percentage (*note that tie games are NOT half win, half loss, they just are not counted at all*)
- 2- Head – to – head won/loss percentage
- 3- Most runs scored in head – to – head competition.
- 4- Fewest runs allowed **per game** in regular season.
- 5- Coin toss or random drawing supervised by a league official

In any playoff and championship, the home team is the higher seeded team (#1 is higher than #2, etc.). **Teams keep the same original seed position throughout the playoffs and championship;** a lower seeded team which wins against a higher seeded team does not gain the home field advantages of the higher seed position.

The first 8 teams in the regular season standings will be called the upper division and their playoffs will lead to the league championship. The remaining teams will be called the lower division and their playoffs will lead to the lower division championship. The lower division champion will be automatically seeded into the upper division playoffs the following year.

### Aug. 25, Upper Division

- Game A: team #8 at team #1
- Game B: team #7 at team #2
- Game C: team #6 at team #3
- Game D: team #5 at team #4

### Aug. 25, Lower Division

- Team #9 has a bye
- Game F: team #15 at team #10
- Game G: team #14 at team #11
- Game H: team #13 at team #12

### Sept. 8, Upper Division

- Game J: Game A winner vs. Game D winner
- Game K: Game B winner vs. Game C winner

### Sept. 8, Lower Division

- Game L: Game H winner at team #9
- Game M: Game F winner vs. Game G winner

### Sept. 15, League Championship

Game J winner vs. Game K winner (this game will be played at Montpelier Recreation Field)

### Sept. 15, Lower Division Championship

Game L winner vs. Game M winner (this game will be played at Montpelier High School Field)

### Sept. 22, State Championship

League Champion vs. GMMMSBL Champion (this game will be played at Montpelier Recreation Field)

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## Interview: Steve Wright

*Our league has expanded so much that we now have two players named Steve Wright. We also have two named Steve Chase. If another Steve Ferreira shows up then we'll know there's something funny going on.*

*This Steve Wright is the veteran pitcher for the Lake Region Rangers who is in his 10<sup>th</sup> season in the league. While with Newport in 1998, Steve pitched a 13 inning complete game win against Champlain in the playoffs. Steve is a former Vermont Fish & Wildlife Commissioner, and is now the New England Coordinator of the National Wildlife Federation.*



### **VOTBN: What is your baseball background and how did you get started in our league?**

**Steve:** I played high school baseball in rural Georgia - usually second base because I was the smallest player on the team and could catch the ball. I would have loved to play college baseball but my school, Georgia Southern College, was a national power and won an NAIA national title my sophomore year. I wasn't good enough. So, I played tennis - two years on the varsity squad.

When I came to Vermont in the summer of '68 I discovered Town Team baseball, and my natural position - center field. I played at that level, and league softball for almost 20 years. Surgery for a brain tumor knocked me back for a while in '90 but Senior League baseball provided me a reason and method for recovery.

I began playing for the Newport team led by Floyd Brown in '93, but relocated to third base because the surgery took my balance nerve and the ability to catch a fly ball. Losing that ability, which for all my life had seemed so natural, has been intensely frustrating for me but provides great laughs - and occasional tears - for my teammates. Those of you who have played against me for the past ten years have no doubt noticed the collective "oh shit!!" response of my teammates every time a pop fly heads in my direction.

And that, of course, is why I now am on the pitcher's mound. I just throw the ball toward the plate and then try to get out of the way. Senior League ball has been a great thing for me in many ways, especially the contact with teammates and other players. I think my earliest memory of my father - who died when I was quite young - is of standing under a set of bleachers holding his hand before he ran out to play center field for a town team in Milledgeville, Georgia. So, in some ways, I'm reliving that, and it's a privilege.

### **VOTBN: Why do you wear yellow socks?**

**Steve:** There are three reasons for this, all carefully considered in my effort to learn more about the craft of pitching and how to get better at it. First, I have learned that hitters are distracted - sometimes mesmerized - by the yellow socks. Even great Senior

League hitters like Craig, Louis, Bob, Dave, Larry, Dick, Jimmy, Steve, and others are dazzled by the socks.

The second reason for wearing the yellow socks is that they were the ones on sale at Mills and Greer nearly ten years ago. The third and final reason for wearing yellow socks is that they are easier to find in the sock drawer.

### **VOTBN: Although this interview will appear after the league has voted on wood vs. metal bats, please tell us whether you favor prohibiting metal bats, and why or why not.**

**Steve:** I like the idea of going to wood partly because it provides me with a ready source of kindling for the winter. All I do is break wooden bats because I never hit the ball properly. If we do switch next year, I will have to apply for yet another home equity loan in order to buy enough bats for the season.

I have considered switching to one of those little novelty bats that you get at the ballpark because the only part of the bat I use on the ball is the handle. A nice exception for over-60 players would be the opportunity to use a tennis racket. Then, I might make contact.

The metal bats are a little scary but they come in real nice colors, and when you strike out you can bash them on the plate without worry about breakage.

### **VOTBN: What are the goals of the National Wildlife Federation, and what issues are you currently dealing with?**

**Steve:** The goals of the National Wildlife Federation are to help people learn how to protect our natural heritage. I get to work on issues from Alaska oil drilling (a bad idea in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) to the Champion Lands purchase (a great deal for Vermont).

Much of my professional work has been in the natural resources area primarily because of my origins as a hunter and fisherman. I still pursue both sports passionately; in fact they are not sports for me but an integral part of my life. I must hunt, and fish, and play ball in order to live.

I would like to make some sort of contribution to future generations' ability to do the same. I suppose there will always be baseball but brook trout, deer, warblers, grouse, salamanders, and butterflies are vulnerable because they all come from a healthy landscape - which the human race sometimes seems determined to destroy by sheer numbers.

### **VOTBN: Do you still ride a Harley? If so, what model do you own?**

**Steve:** Yes, I do still ride my bike, a '94 Softail Custom, but too damned little this summer. I had a '91 Sporty before this one. A few years ago, I took a month and rode out to the big rally in Sturgis, South Dakota and continued on through Wyoming and Montana and back home. A great trip but Floyd benched me for a while for missing too many ballgames. ♦

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## Just another great day playing the grand old game

By Bob Stanton, Montpelier Monties



On May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2002 another old guy had the opportunity to experience the thrills of days gone by. The old guy in this case would be me, Bob Stanton, a proud and grateful member of the Montpelier Monties. I am a fifty-year-old youngster playing in my fourth season with the Monties. I share this with you now in the true spirit of the game; we need something to soothe the wild beast as we anxiously await Sunday

afternoon and the next opportunity to become the ultimate boys of summer. So here's my story for what it's worth; if nothing else, I hope it reminds you of a moment you have treasured as you re-visit your passion for the game each Sunday afternoon.

About a month ago, the Monties had the pleasure of playing the Winooski A's at our home park in Montpelier. As many of you know, the Winooski team is a great group of guys who happen to be pretty good baseball players when they put their minds to it. All the Monties were looking forward to the game as we recalled the great playoff game we had with them last August, when we squeaked out a 13-12 victory in extra innings. For the Winooski team, I suspect it was time to pick up the fray where we left off last year. After all, we were the team that ended their season. Nothing like a little friendly competition to get the juices flowing. We all knew we had the potential to play some good baseball and we were anxious to revisit the contest.

This was the second game of the season for me, (I missed the snow bowl game with Morrisville) and my first opportunity to pitch this year. Up to this point, I had been a relief pitcher and one of those versatile, "where you gonna put the chunky older guy" infielders.

Today was my opportunity to start... As many of you bullpen guys know, it's a reliever's dream to get the call to join the starting rotation. Without giving away any secrets, I can tell you it was part of a new strategy cooked up by our front office guys over the winter as they contemplated how we were going to improve on last years record.

Enough said, let me cut to the chase. Not only did I get the start, I got to pitch six innings!! The only other previous start I had in our league came two years ago when most of our guys were on vacation. That is a story for some other day... The highlight of my experience is this: I pitched six strong innings, striking out two or three batters and I left the mound with the game tied 3-3. I also had a good hit, my first of this young season. Winooski went on to win this rematch 6-3. Now here comes the good part... As we went through the line to shake hands, I received several compliments on my performance from the opposing players and the Winooski catcher handed me the game ball! "What a sweet moment".... I have not received a game ball since I played for Post 207, a few moons ago, as you may have guessed. To top it all off, the game ball was given to me by the opposing team who had just put my club in the book, so to speak.

It was a class act, a sweet moment, and something I will treasure. Thanks guys, you made an older guy feel young ..... see you in Winooski. (Editor's note: the teams play again on Aug.18) ♦



Bob Stanton in action.

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## Letters to the Editor



Send letters by email to [mikew@together.net](mailto:mikew@together.net) or by regular mail to P.O. Box 10, Newport, VT 05855. Every letter must be signed, but your name will not be printed if you so request.

**To the Editor,**

**In my e-mail there was something about reporting our statistics and being able to compare averages with other teams in the MSBL. Does our league take part in that?**

**Mark V.**

*Mark: A company called Scorebook.com offers the service of collecting statistics from all MSBL leagues and teams and creating a national ranking that you can see on a web site. To participate, your team and others in our league would have to keep accurate game records and have someone who is willing to promptly write up the box score and submit the data over the Internet. The cost is \$85 per team per year.*

*So far there has not been a noticeable demand for that level of detail. Take a look at the web site [www.scorebook.com/msbl](http://www.scorebook.com/msbl) and see if you want to encourage your team and others to sign up. If so then the correct time to bring it up at the league level would be the first meeting next season, in February. ♦*

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## Last Chance to Sign Up for MSBL World Series in Phoenix

There is still time to sign up for the league's team entered in the annual post-season MSBL World Series tournament in Phoenix, Arizona, Oct. 28 - Nov. 2, 2002.

If you want to play, send an e-mail message to Mike Wagner at [mikew@together.net](mailto:mikew@together.net) or call 802-334-7514. Be prepared to pay \$250. This will cover the tournament entry fee and your uniform jersey and hat. Checks should be made out to "N.VT Old-Timers Baseball" and mailed to Mike at PO Box 10, Newport VT 05855.



### **What is it?**

An annual end of season tournament played on major league training fields around Phoenix, Arizona. It attracts about 5000 players on 400 teams, in different age and skill divisions. Each team plays 6 games in 4 days Monday - Thursday, then playoff and championship games as needed Friday and Saturday. The event ends with an awards banquet on Saturday night; usually there is a guest speaker at that event.

### **Our team:**

This year we will have our own team representing our league. The team will be called the **Vermont Catamounts** and will play in an age 38+ division. If we get 25-30 players who want to go then we will also have a team in an age 48+ division. MSBL tournament rules say that players who will turn 38 through December 31, 2002 are eligible to play in the age 38+ divisions.

**Our league's age restrictions for pitching DO NOT APPLY to MSBL tournaments: everyone is eligible to pitch.**

### **Dates:**

Players should arrive on Saturday Oct. 26, in order to get used to the climate and to participate in the team practice. We have reserved a practice session on Sunday Oct. 27, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. We will play 6 games during Monday Oct. 28 - Thursday Oct. 31. If we qualify then there would be

playoff games on Friday No. 1 and a championship game on Saturday Nov. 2. The awards banquet is Saturday night, and departure will be Sunday Nov. 3.

### **Travel - air:**

Round trip from Burlington, VT. As of July 14 Northwest Airlines was showing a fare of \$266 round trip per person.

### **Travel - rental car:**

Avis Car Rentals offers a discount for MSBL members; call 1-800-331-1600 and mention Avis Worldwide Discount number T416898. Example of rates: intermediate size car, weekly rate \$176.99 plus tax.

### **Travel - hotel:**

The team hotel is the Marriott at Phoenix Airport (44th St.), which is conveniently located to the main MSBL field at Tempe Diablo Stadium, and to other fields. It has a dining room, weight room, pool with Jacuzzi and full hotel services (room service, laundry, etc.). Basic rate is \$99 per room per night, plus tax. This is a team rate for minimum 10 rooms. Each player can take a room or 2 players can share a room, same price.

### **Tournament entry fee:**

\$250 cost covers tournament entry fee and uniform.

### **Uniforms:**

2 jerseys, mesh short sleeve, one is dark green with white letters and numbers, one is white with dark green letters and numbers. Hat, flex-fit style, dark green. Players will need one pair of gray and one pair of white pants, and socks should be all white, or white with dark green vertical stripe.

### **Practice:**

The team is also entered in the Labor Day weekend MSBL regional tournament in Albany, NY, in the age 38+ division, at no extra charge. However, if your regular team is going to Albany, then you should go there with your regular team.

Participation at the Albany tournament is optional, you won't get kicked off the team if you can't make it to Albany. Note that the age 38+ division at Albany will be using wood bats only. There is no 48+ division at that tournament.

There will be a game scheduled in the Burlington area against a team from Ottawa, Canada, which will be touring in Vermont at the end of September.

We will also play October 13 at Middlebury College against a team of attendees at a fantasy baseball weekend.

**League meeting, continued from p. 1, col. 1****Courtesy Runner Rule Clarified**

There was a discussion of the rule which permits a courtesy runner for a player who has reached base. No changes were made.

Teams are reminded that the courtesy runner should be the player who made the last out. That out could have occurred in the same inning (if there is at least 1 out) or in a previous inning (if there are no outs yet).

The existing rule is reprinted here for everyone's reference.

**11. Courtesy runners**

- a) If a player who reaches base should not run due to injury, or is the pitcher, they may request a courtesy runner, without having to leave the game or to be removed from the batting lineup.
- b) The courtesy runner must be the last player to be out, whether at bat or on the bases.
- c) If a courtesy runner is needed in the first inning before any outs are recorded, it will be the last player in the batting order.
- d) The current pitcher and catcher may be excused from acting as courtesy runners for other players.

**'No Leading Off Base' Rule Clarified**

There was a question as to how exactly a runner is called out for being off their base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

The page of instructions to umpires (yellow page) makes it clear that this is an umpire's judgment call based on the umpire seeing the play. It is not an appeal play (the way leaving a base too soon on a fly ball is).

The umpire calls 'no pitch', and calls the runner out.

**Player Conduct**

Floyd Brown, President of the league, wants to remind all managers and players that the rules about player conduct, as spelled out in the "Code of Conduct" which every player has signed, will be strictly enforced.

For example, the umpire should eject from the game any player who throws equipment in anger. Floyd Brown said he would suspend a repeat offender for 4 games. Managers were reminded to discuss this with the umpire prior to the game.

As an explanation of the reason behind the rules about conduct, one of the managers

reminded everyone of the league's mission statement, which appears on the "Code of Conduct" and on the web page:

**A hardball league for age 35 and over that plays a safe, fun, and competitive game of baseball in an atmosphere of good sportsmanship.**

**Age Distribution of Players**

The league Secretary presented a table showing the average age of players on each team. The league average for 239 players is 45.31 years old. From youngest to oldest, the team averages are:

team	avg. age
Morrisville	43.15
Caledonia	43.62
Northfield	43.71
Mad River	43.85
Kingdom	44.00
Killington	44.50
Burlington	44.64
Newport	44.80
Winooski	44.85
S. Royalton	45.78
Chelsea	45.94
Montpelier	46.06
Champlain	46.38
Lake Region	47.69
Jericho	48.36

*This was the final league meeting for this season. The next meeting will be in February 2003, date, time and location to be announced.* ♦

**Got a computer? Check out our web site and let us know your e-mail address.**

In case you didn't know, our league has a web site with the complete schedule and results, updated weekly throughout the season: [baseball.neknetwork.com](http://baseball.neknetwork.com)

If you received this newsletter in the mail but you have an e-mail address, please let your manager and the league know about it so you can get future issues and other notices sooner.

**Vermont Old-Timer Baseball News**

is published by:

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**Next issue: September 24, 2002**