

Vermont Senior Baseball News

Vol. 2, No. 3

The newsletter of the Vermont Senior Baseball League Inc., founded 1984 by Floyd Brown

July 2003

edited by Mike Wagner

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Results of Sunday, July 13:

Killington 4, Burlington 1
Lake Region 5, Champlain 4
Jericho 7, Chelsea 5
Williston 11, South Royalton 3
Morrisville 6, Winooski 2
Montpelier 7, Danville 2
Mad River Valley 3, Caledonia 1
Newport 8, Northfield 4

Standings:

Team	W	L	Pct.	GB
Morrisville	11	0	1.000	-
Mad River Valley	8	2	.800	2.5
Burlington	7	2	.778	3
Lake Region	7	2	.778	3
Killington	8	3	.727	3
Jericho	6	4	.600	4.5
Champlain	5	5	.500	5.5
Montpelier	5	6	.455	6
Chelsea	4	6	.400	6.5
Williston	4	6	.400	6.5
Winooski	4	6	.400	6.5
Caledonia	3	7	.300	7.5
Northfield	3	8	.273	8
South Royalton	3	8	.273	8
Danville	2	7	.222	8
Newport	1	9	.100	9.5

Schedule for Sunday, July 20:

Jericho at Champlain, 1:00 pm
Williston at Winooski, 12:00 noon
Mad River Valley at Chelsea, 12:00 noon
Montpelier at Killington, 12:00 noon
Northfield at South Royalton, 12:00 noon
Lake Region at Caledonia, 12:00 noon, 2 games
Newport at Danville, 12:00 noon, completion of suspended game followed by regular game
Burlington at Morrisville, 12:00 noon

Keep up to date with league results and news on our web site:

<http://baseball.neknetwork.com>

Midseason Meeting Results

The league's midseason meeting was held in Williston on July 13 following that day's games.

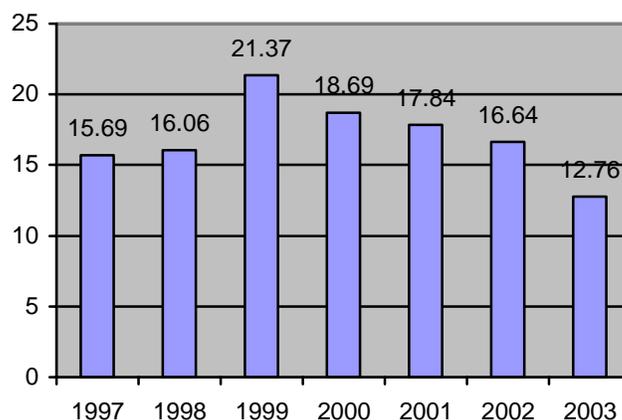
Golf Tournament Announced

The idea of a fund raising golf tournament was approved, based on guidelines submitted by Rocky Harlow, and he was authorized to proceed with the planning and implementation of the event. The target date will be late September, at a centrally located golf course. Contact your team manager or the editor for more information.

Adjusting To Wood Bats

The managers discussed the effect of the switch to wood bats. The rate of breakage seems to have slowed. One result is that game scores are about 24% lower this year than in 2002, as shown in the chart below, which compares average runs per game for the years 1997 - 2003.

Average Runs Per Game 1997-2003



Getting Closer To Full Baseball Rules

There was a discussion about whether to bring our game closer to normal baseball rules by allowing any or all of these:

- advance on passed ball or wild pitch
- leading off base
- base stealing

While no proposal came to a vote, there was a clear consensus that base stealing would open the door to

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Midseason Meeting Results, continued

many potential problems and should still be prohibited. However many teams spoke favorably about allowing a runner to advance on a passed ball or wild pitch, and at least 2 teams said they would play one or more games with that rule, and then report back to the league on the players' feelings about the change.

A feature of the passed ball rule would be that the ball would have to get away from the catcher by a minimum distance, for example a 12 foot radius circle centered at the bottom of home plate.

Player Age And Team Results

There was a discussion about whether an influx of younger players is benefiting certain teams. An analysis of average age and team results, which is

reproduced below, shows no correlation at all between player age and team results. The 4 youngest teams are all in the lower division, the 4 highest placed teams are in the middle of the age range, and the 4 oldest teams have above average results. The data is through July 13.

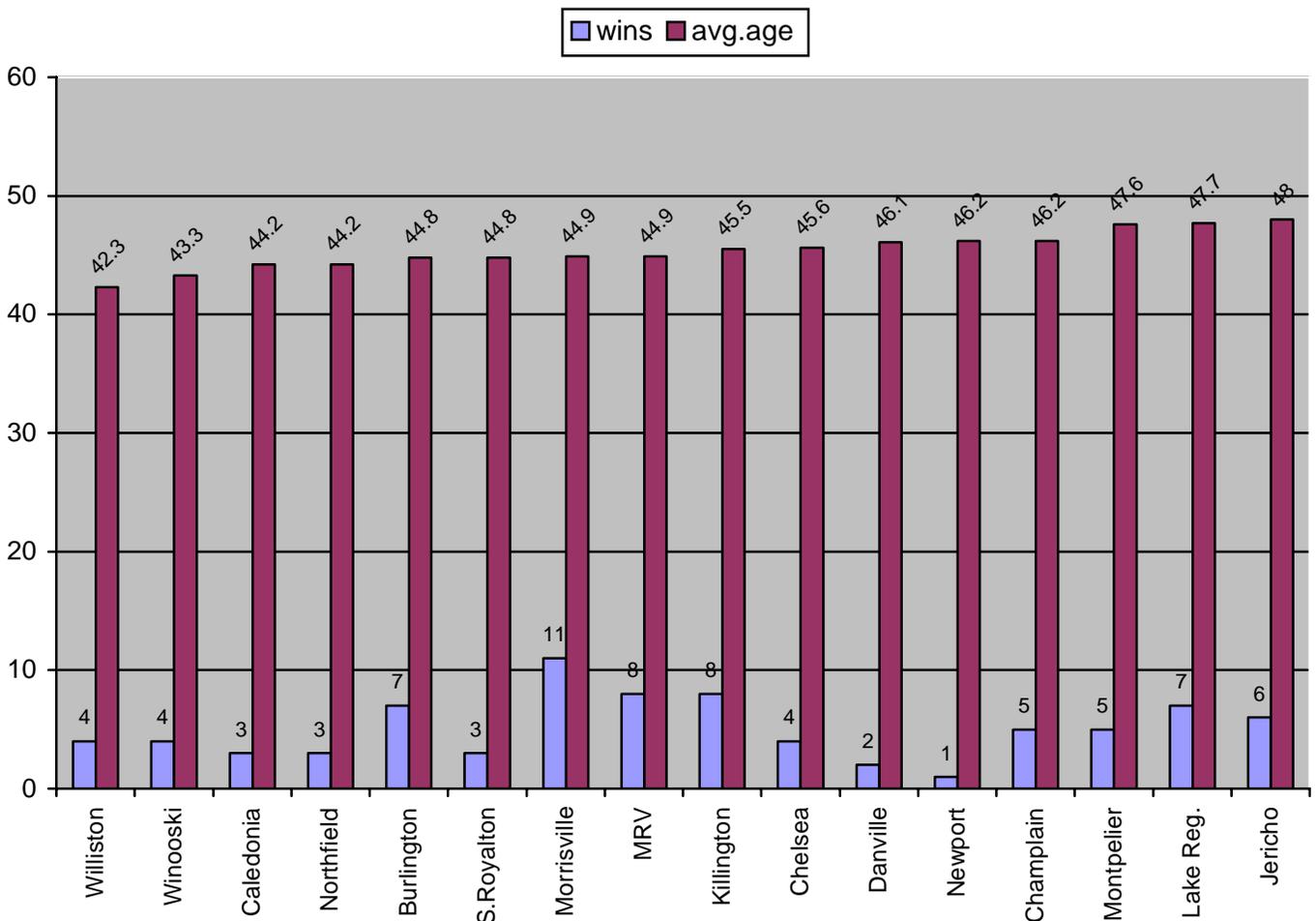
Changes to Regular Season Schedule

The teams approved a change to the regular season schedule starting in 2004. Instead of playing 2 games against teams in close geographic proximity and therefore not playing certain other teams at all, in 2004 there will be a complete round robin, with every team playing every other team one time. The schedule will show all teams without any geographic division labels.

Next League Meeting Will Be In February 2004

The next official meeting will be the 2004 organizing meeting, in February, date, time and location to be announced. ♦

Average Age of Players Compared to Number of Team Wins, 2003



Playoff and Championship Format

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

A player must play in at least 4 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- Fewest runs allowed **per game** in regular season.
- 4- 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. *Note: Last year's lower division winner Montpelier is automatically seeded into the upper division this year, but there will not be any automatic seeding into the upper division in the future.*

Aug. 24, 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. 24, Lower Division

- Game E: team #16 at team #9
- Game F: team #15 at team #10
- Game G: team #14 at team #11
- Game H: team #13 at team #12

Aug.31, Upper Division

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

Aug.31, Lower Division

- Game L: Game E winner vs. Game H winner
- Game M: Game F winner vs. Game G winner

Sept. 7, League Championship

- Game J winner vs. Game K winner

Sept. 7, Lower Division Championship

- Game L winner vs. Game M winner

Sept. 14, State Championship

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

Don't Throw That Bat!

By Floyd Brown, League President



Recently I heard of an incident in which a player was called out on strikes and threw his bat against the fence on his way back to the dugout. If this was what happened then he should have been ejected from the game by the umpire.

Every player has signed the league's code of conduct, and the main parts are listed below. Be sure you review this code and comply with it. It is the manager's responsibility to make sure every player knows and follows the rules.

The goal of our league is to provide teams and players a means to enjoy a safe, fun, and competitive game of baseball in an atmosphere of good sportsmanship. The purpose of this document is to highlight certain specific league rules concerning player conduct which every player must follow (paragraph numbers are from the league's official rules).

9b) Any of the following actions can result in a player being ejected from a game, with possible suspension from additional games:

- Pushing an umpire or intentionally blocking an umpire's movement.
- Sustained arguing of an umpire's decision.
- Using abusive, profane, or obscene language or gestures.
- Throwing a bat, glove, helmet or other equipment in anger.
- Creating a disruptive, threatening or dangerous situation.

9c) A player who is ejected from a game must leave the playing field and may not remain in the dugout, but may stay in the immediate area (grandstands, etc.). If a player is ejected from a game and fails to leave the playing field and dugout area, or if the player remains in the immediate area and creates disturbances, then the player's team risks forfeiting the game.

Interview: Wayne Perry



At age 58 Wayne Perry is the oldest player on the Northfield North Stars, and he is a vital part of the team. In addition to his pitching and hitting Wayne keeps the scorebook for the team and creates a box score and season statistical analysis using a computer spreadsheet that he designed.

VSBN: You usually videotape each game. Is that so you can study your pitching mechanics?

Wayne: I videotape the games so that I can go over the score sheet to verify what was entered. I tried to come up with some team statistics for last year but with so many different people keeping the book I couldn't get much out of it. In some innings, there were no entries as to how some batters got on base, and outs would be scored just as 1, 2 or 3 - not how the putout occurred. I try to at least cover the infield in the picture because that is where most of the action occurs. You can't analyze the pitching from that angle, it is just too wide to catch the detail and usually the first baseman is right in the line of sight. But I do get to watch the game again and see a lot of things that I may have missed by being in the dugout or chasing foul balls.

VSBN: Are you a native of Vermont?

Wayne: Yes, I grew up around Stowe and played ball in High School there; I graduated in 1962. Then I went into the Air Force and served 7 ½ years. After basic training and schools, I got stationed at Evreux-Fauville Air Base near Paris. That was where I met my wife Annick. The squadron was moved back to Ohio when French President DeGaulle decided it was time for us to move out of France, but we still had some temporary duty back there at that time. On one of those trips Annick and I got married in Versailles and it has been almost 39 years. We have two children living in New Hampshire.

VSBN: Did the Air Force send you to Vietnam?

Wayne: Yes, my specialty was avionics electronics. My job was to maintain and repair aircraft instruments, anything from altimeters to central data computers. While in Vietnam for a year's tour of duty I had to find something to do when I got out, so I took a correspondence course in radio/TV repair with an FCC license for broadcasting.

VSBN: What did you do after military service?

Wayne: After being discharged I started a TV repair service in Stowe for about a year but it didn't really catch my interest, so I went to the local TV stations to see if anybody was hiring. Vermont ETV had an opening and I was lucky enough to be hired. I've been in or associated with broadcasting one way or another since then. First with ETV for five years, then I went to Utica, NY for three years and then on to Boston at Channel 7 from 1978 to 1995 until Annick and I moved back to Vermont.

We've had a business that we've run out of our house since then repairing industrial and professional broadcast equipment, but it's being closed down this year. Not too many customers and too time consuming. I had to make a choice, baseball on Sundays or work seven days a week. Tough choice! Plus I've been working at Vermont Public

Radio for the last two and a half years, which is a great place to be. My job there is to try and keep all the equipment at the studio and VPR's 5 transmitters up and running. To quote an engineer I know, "failure is always the equipment's option."

VSBN: When you came back in 1995 why did you choose Northfield and not Stowe?

Wayne: While I was working at Channel 7 in Boston, we came back to visit my parents and the family several times in Stowe. The town seemed to have changed a lot since I had lived there. Lots more businesses, more signs, much more tourist oriented. One day Annick and I saw this 1840's mini-farm in Northfield that we both loved. We were able to buy it and have lived there since. The floors are crooked which is probably why I have a hard time running to first base, but it's our home.

VSBN: How did the team handle the long losing streak last year after winning the opening game?

Wayne: I think everyone was just so happy to be playing baseball again that it didn't bother anyone too much. Of course you want to win, who doesn't? But the attitude of the team seemed to be 'We'll do better next year'. And it was our freshman year in the league so it took us a while to get our legs, bats and arms working together. We were doing much better at the end of the year, especially in the lower division playoffs, and that has carried over.

VSBN: Your son is now 35, can we expect to see him playing baseball in our league soon?

Wayne: No, both of our children got all of their talent from their mother. She has a wonderful eye for painting and the arts. Both Eric and Dawn went into graphics related fields.



Above, Wayne Perry on the way to winning a game on July 7.

Last Chance to Sign Up for MSBL World Series Tournament

There are still a few spots open for the post-season MSBL World Series tournament in Phoenix, Arizona, Oct. 27 - Nov. 1, 2003.

If you want to play, send an e-mail message to Mike Wagner at mike@wagner-usa.net or call 802-334-7514. Be prepared to pay \$275, which is for the tournament entry fee and uniform jerseys and hat (those who played last year pay \$200 if they still have the uniform). Checks should be made out to Mike Wagner 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. The games are 9 innings with full rules: stealing, etc. Each team plays 6 games in 4 days, then playoff and championship games as needed. The event ends with an awards banquet on Saturday night; usually there is a guest speaker at that event.



Our teams:

Our league will have teams in the age 38+ division and the age 48+ division. Both teams are called the Vermont Catamounts. The teams will be limited to 14 players each. The league does not subsidize the cost. It is up

to the players to pay their own way. Under MSBL tournament rules a player is eligible if their qualifying birthday occurs any time through December 31. So if you will turn 38 on December 15 then you can play in an age 38+ division. Our league's age restrictions for pitching DO NOT APPLY to MSBL tournaments: everyone is eligible to pitch.

We also have reserved a field for a 2 hour practice session the day before the games start.

Travel - air:

Last year most players got round trip tickets between Burlington and Phoenix for about \$250 per person; it will probably be higher this year. We arrive Saturday Oct. 25, have a team practice Sunday Oct. 26, and the games start Monday Oct. 27. The return flight is Sunday Nov. 2.

Travel - rental car:

Avis and Enterprise offer discounts for MSBL members. Last year we rented a couple of vans and the cost worked out to about \$100 per player for the whole week.

Travel - hotel:

The teams stay at 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 (laundry, room service). Basic rate is \$89 per room per night, plus tax. This is a team rate for a minimum of 10 rooms. Each player can take a room or 2 players can share a room, same price.



Above, Killington's John Clark at bat against the Calgary Cardinals at the 2002 MSBL World Series Tournament

Application Form For MSBL World Series, Phoenix, Arizona, Oct. 27 – Nov. 1, 2003

Which division: age 38+ _____ age 48+ _____

Name _____

Date of birth (month-day-year): _____

Address _____

City-State-Zip _____

Played in Arizona in 2002? Yes _____ No _____

Telephone _____

If no, desired uniform shirt size (M-L-XL-2XL) _____

Email _____

and desired number _____

Regular team name _____

Positions played _____

Entry fee \$200. Add \$75 for uniform (2 jerseys and hat). Make check payable to Mike Wagner.

Mail this form to:

Mike Wagner
PO Box 10
Newport, VT 05855

or copy the above information into an email and send to: mike@wagner-usa.net

Letters to the Editor

Send letters by email to baseball@neknetwork.com or by regular mail c/o Mike Wagner, P.O. Box 10, Newport, VT 05855. Every letter must be signed, but your name will not be printed if you so request.

Note: the author of the following letter is an outfielder for the Jericho Indians. He and his family are spending a year in New Zealand.

To the Editor:

I've been watching with interest the outcome of the wood bat issue. I've been interested to see if the "small ball" game will come back with wood bat use. As you know I am also for going back to regular baseball rules (stealing, dropped 3rd strikes, etc.) Although I know the main concerns are, we'll need two umpires and the game scores may get out of whack, I would like to propose that this item be discussed at the summer meeting. My proposal would be to play 2 games (set 2 consecutive dates so the teams could get used to it) this year and see what feedback we get during the off season. My feeling is that it will bring the catcher back into the game and make the game more involved for everyone (just ask the guys who have played in the Albany and Phoenix tournaments how much more fun the game is with the real baseball rules). I'm really missing baseball and especially the Jericho Indians. I hope everyone stays healthy! So long from "down under". Craig Armstrong.

Craig,

As noted elsewhere in this issue, your proposal was discussed at the league meeting on July 13. It looks like the majority are willing to consider allowing runners to advance on passed balls and wild pitches, but are not willing to go so far as to allow leading off base and stealing. There will be some games in which the rules variations will be tried.

On behalf of the players and managers I want to wish you and your family well and express the hope that your year away down under is turning out to be a success. When you get back, don't forget to drive on the right and run the bases counter-clockwise. ♦

Affiliated with Mens Senior Baseball League



Bottom of the Lineup By Mike Wagner, Editor



It sometimes happens that a team gets in a losing streak and nothing goes right. The Newport team won 8 games in 2002 and finished in the upper division. But this season we were the first to clinch a spot in the lower division.

To anyone who has to endure that kind of season I recommend careful study of the Northfield and Caledonia teams in their inaugural seasons last year.

The North Stars won the first game they ever played (which was against Newport, ironically) and then proceeded to lose all their remaining regular season games for a 14 game losing streak and a last place finish. But did that team fold its tents and slink away into the night? No way, they pulled a first round playoff upset over 6 game winner Winooski, 12-6.

The Caledonia Bucks lost their first 9 games before breaking through against Winooski at home, 12-5. They then lost their remaining 4 games to finish barely ahead of Northfield in the standings. But the Bucks also scored an upset win in the first playoff round, pounding Kingdom by a 22-13 score.

That set up a lower division semifinal game between the two previously slumbering powerhouses, which turned out to be an edge-of-your-seat battle, won by Caledonia, 12-11. That put them into the lower division championship game against Montpelier, a game that also ended 12-11, but in favor of the Monties.

I think this shows that while we don't quite have full parity among teams in terms of talent, we do have full parity in terms of desire to play and love of the game. Those are valuable assets in all situations, and are especially important to have when things aren't going as well as you had hoped. ♦

Vermont Senior Baseball News

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Visit our website at: baseball.neknetwork.com
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