

**Montana District 2 Little League
President's Meeting**

**January 18, 2023
Microsoft Teams/on-line**

PRESENT

Officers

Keith Miller, DA	Daurine Spritzer, Secretary/ADA	Greg McGillen, Information Officer
Stephanie Galle – ADA Anaconda	Max Cannon, UIC – Mount Sentinel	Wayne Wade, UIC – District
Will McCarthy – ADA Missoula	Duane Meiers - ADA Missoula	

Presidents

Josh Bush (Northwest)	Mike Duffy (Mile High)	Kate McGree (Copper City Softball)
Sammy Brant (Frenchtown)	Will Garten (Americans)	Kevin Miltko (Garden City Softball)
Tim Chamberlain (Jumbo/Westside)	Alyssa Creighton (Beaverhead)	Nick Prinzing (GF Westside)
Roanie Elliott (Sentinel)	Shawn Blair (North Bitterroot)	Angella Galle (Anaconda)

Additional

Andy Bartlome (Beaverhead)	Jaimee Richards (Copper City Softball)	Cory Hafliger (Mount Sentinel)
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ABSENT

Angella Galle (Anaconda)	Sean Herrick (Deer Lodge)	Rachel Baumgam (Pioneer)
Mary Bousman (Malmstrom)	Greg Schoby (Riverside)	Ned Ellingwood (Treasurer)
Joan O'Neill (ADA)	Maureen Price (ADA)	Shane Meyers (UIC/Great Falls)
Skyler Criscuolo (UIC/Butte)		

Keith Miller called the meeting to order (via Microsoft Teams) at 7:00 p.m. with rollcall of attendees. He had sent out the link for background checks and asked people to get them completed as soon as possible. District 2 Montana is the second largest geographical district in the country. Using the on-line option for the meeting provides an easier way for everyone to attend and be a part of the process without the travel (and time) costs.

MOTION: Kevin Miltko made a motion to accept the Minutes from the February 2, 2022 District Meeting with the correction of listing Cory Hafliger (Sentinel) as present; Shawn Blair seconded. All voted in favor; motion carried.

District Administrator Standards

Little League Baseball Inc. provides a list of standards that all District Administrators are expected to follow during the course of a year. When the tournament enrollment sheets are filled out by league presidents, there is the opportunity to evaluate him on how well he is serving the leagues. As our district is so spread out, he holds several meetings when he travels to the different cities during the tournament season.

Grants

Many of our leagues are submitting foundation/grant applications or having fundraising drives for field development or other necessities. Keith encouraged the presidents to incorporate Little League in their organization's name as it helps to give credibility to their requests.

District Financial

In 2021, the District Dues motions were voted on for two years, so there is no action that is necessary this year. For 2023, player fees were increased from \$8 to \$10 per player, and the Umpire Fund (for travel expenses) assessment was raised from \$150 to \$175 per league. League dues are calculated by the previous year's player registration numbers. The overall costs of providing district-wide training (i.e. umpire clinics) will be shared equally by all of the leagues.

District Enrollment

In the meeting packet is the league enrollment spreadsheet from 1997 through 2022. The 2022 year shows growth in many leagues on a positive trajectory. with both Beaverhead and Copper City Softball showing a good increase in numbers. He asked that leagues keep registration open for as long as possible to accommodate youngsters who want to play but may be late in getting enrolled. He suggested creating a waiting list or charge an additional fee to allow for latecomers. Butte leagues are working on different ways to increase enrollment, especially for the teenage divisions where scheduling in travel ball or Legion teams as Little League Baseball is approving options.

Tournaments

The kids had lots of fun throughout their tournament experiences last summer. Beaverhead hosted the baseball District Tournaments and provided great hospitality and excellent field crews to make sure that kids had a good experience with great fields to play on. Keith mentioned the positive experiences that the umpires were treated, and he believes that our leagues keep getting better at hosting all levels of tournaments.

We sent three teams of 8/10s (Mile High, Mount Jumbo Westside, Beaverhead) to Billings for the Baseball State Tournaments. All three presidents felt it was well worth the time and expense to travel there as the Billings leagues did a nice job of hosting. Keith will discuss the option of sending that many teams with the D1 DA to make sure they have the same feeling.

Mount Jumbo Westside won the 11-year old division and the Major Division and traveled to Billings. Tim Chamberlain said that his teams had an awesome experience while participating during the tournaments in Dillon. Keith asked how it compared to Missoula as host. Tim reported that things went well and was happy that they also provided a team breakfast for the Majors.

The Junior Division was represented by the boys from Butte Northwest and Mile High. They traveled to Bend, Oregon where they had a lot of fun. Josh Bush felt that the Butte team brought more to the tournament than they received but, all in all, it was worth the time.

The Little League Softball District and State Tournaments were hosted by Garden City Softball in Missoula, with District 1 advancing to San Bernadino. Both teams enjoyed the state tournament breakfast and enjoyed the speaker – Brooklyn Weisgram – a former player for both Garden City Softball and the University of Montana Softball team. Keith hopes that this will start a tradition for future state tournaments – for both softball and baseball.

Both of Montana Districts' tournament softball programs played the 9/11 division in 2022. In Missoula, all 4 of District 2 tournament teams (Copper City, Garden City Maroon, Garden City Purple, North Bitterroot) participated with two teams from District 1 in the State 9-11 Tournament - held at the same time as the Senior Western Regional. After pool play, the tournament was divided into 2 brackets which allowed for two winners. For the actual State Tournament, co-champions were declared as we simply ran out of time. Garden City Softball contracted with the U of M's Softball Team's coaches and a few players to provide a softball clinic for all of the 9/11 girls on the Griz field. This was so well received that the Billings coach wants to do it this summer with the team from MSU-Billings.

Kate McGree, Copper City Softball, said that it was a great weekend and the experience that her team had with the Griz staff and lunch with the Hawaii Senior girls made so many positive memories. Kate also mentioned about the very negative experience she had two years ago with Billings and was happy that Keith was working on getting set dates for 2023 by the end of January.

The Senior Softball Western Regional took place in Missoula after a 3-year delay. We had 8 teams with the Southern California girls advancing to the World Series. We also had quite a few really great umpires from out of state that came in for the tournament. As always, they were treated to the best of Montana hospitality during their stay. He also thanked the presidents from Copper City Softball, Mile High, and Northwest for hosting the group while they toured Butte on their day off. One goal that Keith would like to see is a second Montana team in this tournament.

Al Johnson Memorial Umpire Clinic

The clinic was held in Missoula in 2022 with nearly 100 people involved. There has not been a date set for 2023, but it may be scheduled for the weekend before Easter (April 9). This has proven to be a great experience for all of those who attend. Keith said that our umpire trainers are available to put on the clinic in other cities besides Missoula.

Background checks

One of the good things that separate Little League from other youth sports programs is it is a requirement that ALL volunteers have a nationwide background check completed prior to working with kids. This background check is for those individuals who have regular access to the youngsters in Little League programs. Every league is allotted 125 free background checks.

Little League Congress

Congress took place in Williamsport, PA in mid-June of 2022. It was a great opportunity to have input into several upcoming initiatives and rule changes. The events were held at several venues throughout the city, with a Closing Ceremony at Lamade Stadium. Included in this meeting's packet was a copy of the voting results about rule changes. Regulations are issues that are deemed necessary by those individuals in Williamsport. The Little League Rule Book app is free for downloading to phones. Keith touched on the following:

Regulation IV (f)

This change requires players to attend one (1) player evaluation event instead of 50% of the total number of events scheduled by the league.

Rule 3.09

Baseball and Softball (Regular Season) This would aid in efforts to improve the pace of play by allowing adult coaches to warm up pitchers for regular season only. • Managers or coaches are permitted to warm up a pitcher at home plate or in the bullpen or elsewhere at any time including in-game warm-up, pre-game warm-up, and in other instances. They may also stand by to observe a pitcher during warm-up in the bullpen.

Rule 4.10 (e)

Baseball and Softball (Regular Season) This would revise the run rule for all divisions of play during the regular season, adding an additional condition in which, if after five innings [Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League six innings], four and one-half innings [Intermediate (50-70) Division/Junior/Senior League: five and one-half innings], if the home team is ahead, one team has a lead of eight (8) runs or more, the manager of the team with the least runs shall concede the victory to the opponent.

• NOTE: (1) If the visiting team has a lead of fifteen (15), ten (10), or eight (8) runs or more respectively, the home team must bat in its half of the inning. (2) Local league may adopt the option of not utilizing this rule. 15 after 3, 10 after 4, 8 after 5 innings

Rule 6.08 (a) (2)

Baseball and Softball (Regular Season and Tournament Play) This revises the intentional walk rule so that a player may only be intentionally walked by announcing such decision to the plate umpire one time during the course of the game. This would not restrict a team from throwing four balls outside of the strike zone to this batter at another time during the game.

Managers/Coaches in Dugout

Baseball and Softball (Tournament Play) – This would allow teams to have up to three eligible coaches permitted in the dugout regardless of tournament team roster size.

Mandatory Play – Continuous Batting Order: 8- to 10-Year-Old, 9- to 11-Year-Old, Little League, Intermediate (50-70) Division, and Junior League: All Tournament Teams must adopt a policy of a continuous batting order that will include all players on the team affidavit present at the start of the game, to appear in the batting order. Each player is required to bat in his/her respective spot in the batting order.

One possible future major change may be the elimination of league boundaries. A player can first sign up for the league that the family selects to participate in and then, if desired, move to another league. However, the original league must release the player. If the move is approved, the player must sit-out one year of eligibility for tournament team participation. This will undoubtedly hurt smaller communities. It may be a good time to some leagues to consider combining charters to form a larger league. This change currently is not in place.

ASAP Plan

Every league should be working on their individual ASAP that needs to be completed in February. The actual plan can simply be updated for 2023 which gives league personnel a chance to talk about the safety procedures that need to be in place for the upcoming season. It has to include a concussion protocol that is required by Montana Law. Submitting it by the deadline helps with District costs for tournament awards that Keith purchases.

2023 Tournaments

Host cities for the tournaments have been selected for 2023. For all baseball divisions, Great Falls will host the Pool-Play and North Bitterroot will host the District tournaments. State Tournaments will be hosted by the District 2 winners. For all softball divisions, Anaconda will host Districts. The State Tournaments will take place in District 1.

Host leagues retain all revenue from concessions and 50/50 tickets proceeds. Keith talked about set requirements for leagues who are selected as hosts, i.e. umpire housing, game management (a person from each participating team to help with scoring, pitch-count, and announcing), and, for safety, administrative presence at every game.

He reminded the presidents that they have his authority to solve problems, i.e. the tournament director (or assignee) can hold up a game until a disruptive fan leaves the facility.

Tournament Teams

The league's selection process should be in place prior to the beginning of the season. Keith noted that a player can actually participate on 2 tournament teams at the end of the season. The tournament affidavits are the sole responsibility of the league's president who is responsible to certify that every player has their paperwork completed and is eligible to participate.

Deadlines

- Leagues should have their ASAP submitted to the Data Center by March 1st for a District Incentive and by April 1st for a League Incentive (kick-back on insurance costs).
- League Enrollment should be submitted by April 30th (changes can be made as necessary).
- Waiver requests must be completed and approved before June 1st.
- Interleague Play – combined team for Tournament play – submitted to the Data Center, must be approved before games, and approved by the Region by June 1st.
- Adjustment to a league's Charter must be submitted to the Data Center by June 1st for any refunds.
- Tournament Enrollment – must be done by June – regardless if league has any tournament teams.

District Program

In past years, Keith has created a District Tournament program that has proven to be expensive to have printed so it is hard to even cover the actual cost. He is going to attempt to publish an on-line program in color that will allow him to make corrections and schedule updates in real time. It will contain sponsor pages that will be used to cover costs so parents are able to print it off for free. Presidents are asked to secure businesses to advertise in the program.

Miscellaneous

Keith talked about the changes at Universal Athletic that had been sold to Game 1 which has not provided a great customer service experience. Leagues are able to order from Universal without having to go through Game 1. He also mentioned that Dick's Sporting Goods has been a very good partner with Little League over the years.

There continues to be a need to push sportsmanship at games. Players deserve a safe, fun experience. League officials should use good problem-solving and communication skills to handle situations as they arise, i.e. no yelling at umpires before, during, or after games.

Leagues using Sports Connect for their on-line needs should be able to automatically uploads its enrollment data to the Data Center. Several other services can also do this uploading. The Data Center also is accessible so presidents can check on or update their league's information.

Charter Cases or waivers need to be submitted and approved completed prior to the start of games being played.

The 2024 Regional Round Tables Meeting will take place in Anaheim, California. Let Keith know if you are interested in attending.

Keith will send out notice about next meeting which he will schedule for a Wednesday evening in February.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.