

KNOCH YOUTH BASEBALL

July 16, 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Name	Position	Present	Absent	Name	Position	Present	Absent
Justin Thompson (JT)	President/ TWP Rep	X		Josh Harbison (JH)	Twp. Liaison	X	
Steve Tuzikow (ST)	V. P.	X		Jamie McSwaney (JM)	Colt/Legion	X	
Melissa Stobert (MS)	Secretary	X		Curtis Walbert (CW)	Pony	X	
Tom McDougall (TM)	Treasurer		X	John VanLenten (JVL)	Bronco	X	
Josh Harbison (JH)	Field Maint.	X		Mike Hedglin (MH)	Minor	X	
Ali Ciz (AC)	Concessions		X	Joe Brose (JB)	Farm	X	
Zak Sobotka (ZS)	IT/Web	X		Cory Tucek (CT)	T-Ball	X	
Angie Shoop (AS)	Sponsorship	X			Tax Preparer		

JT opened meeting at 6:05 PM . Minutes from 5-29-25 meeting reviewed and approved.

MONTHLY UPDATE –Justin Thompson (JT) reported:

JT: Asked Penn Fencing to wait until the 3rd week of July to work on backstops, but no new update

JT: Fryer still needed (ST has placed some calls): Discussion ensued regarding pros/cons of having a fryer, as well as the need to explore profit margin and perform cost analysis to determine fryer necessity.

Pros discussed: enhances concession options; fried items are popular/desired by many; likely generates the most sales

Cons discussed: can pose safety issues, denies kids the opportunity to work in stand, volunteers don't like manning it

TREASURER'S REPORT – Tom McDougall

Dumpster bill: \$2900

IRS issues: \$3500 resolved from past years

Concession: additional deposits incoming – profit is looking like approximately \$8500

All-star funds: some in and out of funds due to tournaments

Middle school: coaches have been paid

CONCESSIONS – Ali Ciz (AC)

Rough numbers indicate limited profit. May need to reconsider the 25% that is given to all-star teams for concessions sales during home tournaments vs. rethinking item pricing to increase profit. Percentage given to all-star teams must be based on earnings. (if sales are under \$1500, the team should not be getting 25% of profit)

Jen Brose (newly elected concessions manager – to officially begin fulfilling role in September):

- reported probably an additional \$1500 coming in.
- Totes purchased for safe storage. Requests shelving in upper stand similar to lower stand.
- Connected with the woman in charge of softball concessions – suggests selling leftover concession items to them (they have an upcoming tournament). JB to further collaborate.
- Concern with handling raw meat (chicken tenders) in concession stand

- Inquired about the possibility of a greaseless fryer
 - o Per ST, these are 3x as expensive as standard grease fryer
- JT noted that concession sales have been significantly lower since loss of fryer

No rush to purchase now, as the season is ended. Discussion to continue.

FIELD MAINTENANCE – Josh Harbison (JH) reported:

Gasoline is needed

ABI – needs front tires and back drag

No other updates

TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVE – Justin Thompson (JT) reported:

No updates

WEB/IT/SOCIAL MEDIA – Zak Sobotka (ZS) reported:

50 players signed up for fall ball to date

Request for pictures, etc. to be sent to ZS so he can upload to website

SPONSORSHIP – Angie Shoop (AS) reported:

Need to get information out about projects completed **and** upcoming projects to sponsors, community, families

- We should include the cost of completed projects and the estimated costs for future projects

A parent present at meeting requested a form to share with his employer for potential sponsorship or donations. AS to provide him with the information.

Received sponsorship pictures from Holly, but they do not include sponsor's name. Angie will get frames for them, figure out team names and get embroidered/engraved on frame to present to sponsors.

- Board agrees to utilize funds to pay for frames/engraving if Holly cannot add names to photos.

Dick's sporting goods discount for fall ball (20% off) will be August 15-18 in both Butler and Cranberry

Potential fall fundraisers:

Dine to donate – AS will talk to Field House owner to discuss dates

Movie night in the park – great idea from JH; board agrees with planning, but may not be able to charge for entry, as many places offer free movie nights. Would utilize concession stand and additional items (popcorn, etc.). May be on a time crunch for this year, but perhaps a good activity for Community day/night next year. Expense may be in the area of \$1300. Shooting for next year will allow time to see if a business would sponsor the event and plan for vendors being present.

- o A parent present at meeting offered to loan KYB his screen and projector

Bar bingo – hasn't been done in a few years, so may spark some community interest

LEGION/SENIOR COMMISSIONER – Jamie McSwaney (JM) reported:

Field has been sprayed

Freeport classic is next week

Have 17 kids -- working on having 4 fall tourneys – 1 may be at our park. Will consist of varsity players; will be at the pony/legion fields 1-2 days/week

COLT COMMISSIONER – Jamie McSwaney (JM) reported:

PONY COMMISSIONER – Curtis Walbert (CW) reported:

Field looks good – resprayed edge and around fencing; will do dugouts also; will need some Round-Up for fall maintenance; continued cutting of grass is needed

Didn't have a strong season – went 1-11 and had to use some call-ups. Kids did learn a lot and had a lot of fun and the games were close. We finished 7th out of 8 teams. Coach will have an end of the year activity.

BRONCO COMMISSIONER – John VanLenten (JVL) reported:

Team Thrower were the regular season champs and ARL runner-up

Will present picture to Thrower

Overall a great season

11U all-stars were runner up in our home tourney and champs in the Bauerstown tourney this past weekend

12U two more tourneys to go

Bronco to participate with Mars for fall ball

Two proposals:

1. field maintenance – redo Bronco like Pony to allow it to be more playable/hold up to the rain better (used a pallet of field dry at a minimum this year);
2. netting for backstop (averaging the use of 6 game balls per night due to losing them)

MINOR COMMISSIONER – Mike Hedglin (MH) reported:

In-house league finished out competitively – 4 teams were mostly around 500

Enjoyed collaborating with Mars and CT, while doing playoffs with just Knoch teams.

Moving forward.... do we continue doing what we did this year or do we look at ARL? Need to consider that the ARL at the Bronco level wasn't as competitive as Mars and CT

JM – reported that there are 8 Bronco teams in Mars and they didn't have enough fields, so it may be worthwhile working with them again to allow opportunity for a place for them to play and allow for good competition for Knoch

Mars wants to work with us for fall ball at minor and bronco levels

9U all-star B team – got win in Ellwood City tourney and have a few more tourneys coming up: BMP and Riverside

Field – Penn fencing doing backstop very soon; would like to get two concrete steps poured going into dugouts; will spray Round-Up around fence lines

FARM COMMISSIONER – Joe Brose (JB) reported:

Dave Eldridge put framing around rocks and looks great

We need a place for drainage and a tarp

Will need dirt for spring

Still some rocks in pipe and cannot get out; it's been jetted, but still clogged; can't open a post hole digger enough to get the rock(s)

Patch umpires for Farm league playoffs may be needed next year as tensions ran very high. Patch umpires will cost \$250 (1 umpire per playoff game). The kids did a great job, but there were some coaches and parents that gave the kids some difficulties. In addition, the ARL does not permit kid umpires.

Team Sign Pro won the championship

Competitive season overall/very successful/kids learned

7U all-stars still have one more tourney

8U got challenged and competed in some A tourneys; still a couple more B tourneys

Fall ball – will work with Freeport and maybe Natrona Heights

T-BALL COMMISSIONER – Cory Tucek (CT) reported:

Good season – parents really wanted to get all the games in, but had to call the season on July 2

Good numbers signed up already for 7U team

Everyone worked well together

St. Lukes – there are 2 really bad low spots and no equipment there; would like to use this field again, as Pony field is too big; will need a little dirt and hard work to maintain.

Do we have to talk to the church before we do anything to field

- We should let them know, especially if using chemicals on field

Only 9 signed up so far

9U C team is struggling a little, but we're challenging them; have won a game in each tournament

VICE PRESIDENT – Steve Tuzikow (ST) reported:

51 signed up for fall ball – 9 t-ball, 16 farm, 16 minor, 6 bronco, 6 for pony

Typically we have had 3 teams at each level

Middle school – working on a raffle to start soon – fishing trip is grand prize (NY, Erie with additional items)

New Business Not Noted Elsewhere & Open Forum:

Public attendance and discussion:

Review of proposed age-based player placement policy: (summarized):

1. Age based placement – placed based on age as of April 30th of current year (to ensure consistency with national guidelines while promoting safety) – this is extremely similar to the way things functioned just a few years ago.
2. Grade level consideration – while age is primary basis for placement, a player's grade level MAY be considered when it aligns with peer groupings and provides a better social or educational fit.
3. Parent request for alternate placement – parent may request their child be considered for playing up or playing down

*All requests will be reviewed by the League Placement Committee and must meet the following criteria:

- player demonstrates necessary skills and maturity level for requested division
- placement does not create an unfair competitive imbalance
- placement does not pose safety concerns

4. Evaluations and final decisions – league may require players seeking alternate placement to participate in a skill evaluation. Final placement decisions to be made by KYB Board and are not subject to appeal.

5. Team balance and roster needs – placement may be adjusted due to team size or roster balance needs, in rare cases

6. Policy review – policy to be reviewed annually before the start of each season and may be revised to meet the changing needs of KYB

MH: goal of this proposal is to keep kids playing for Knoch and align with other tournaments (April 30 DOB) and give more choice to players/parents

Parent Concern: seems like teams are being broken apart which isn't of benefit to kids that have been playing together for years...shouldn't be up to parents' discretion as to where kids should play...most parents would choose them play with their grade, rather than age. "Why would we all of a sudden change things"?

Parent: asked if the Board received complaints to move board members towards looking to change...is the Board trying to accommodate for specific players that do not have a team?

Board responded: no complaints received – just looking to align with other organizations for all-star play; 10U and 12U groups have been problematic and we want to/need to look at the big picture

Parent suggestion: maybe start when the kids are young rather than disrupting teams now; why make a change for kids who have been playing together

Group discussion: ZS, JT, MH: strong program ages 7-12 with counter discussion that groups 10 and 12 not having enough kids to play for KYB and that this proposal should help keep kids playing for

Parent: expressed that kids are not leaving KYB because it's not competitive but because parents get frustrated and many parents make things challenging in travel ball

Parent: how does this impact the 11U team?

Jamie M explained why rule changed a few years ago: 2021 SABA Board started working on changes, at the same time age cutoff went from 4/30 to 8/31 and needed to meet age cutoff date so needed phase in. The year following we started the middle school program; while SABA was changing age cutoff to 8/31 and all leagues around us changed to this, but all-star programs were established and didn't change dates (kept at 4/30); needed to make a decision and combined both, moving to grade level 1st decision making so we could build a "feeder program" for JV/Varsity with the middle school team; kids would be ahead with further bases and pitching; decision wasn't easy and not sure it was right, but it worked out well with a few exceptions; saw a benefit for younger kids being ready for middle school

Parent: how many teams after 12U stayed within KYB since the change? Do we currently have any kids playing at this age?

- 3 play past age 12 since
- We do not have 13 or 14 year old all-star teams

Parent: 2021 proposed the change and voted on in Feb. 2022 – kids left as a result; maybe some misinformation; if you want your child on an all-star team, there may be two teams, but not going to not have a team

Parent: a few kids that didn't get to play due to "hybrid" team

MH: proposal will not change anyone's placement, as parents have the choice

ST: what if all parents want to play down and not enough to fill 11U team

MH: age is primary factor, but if parent prefers grade, then they can stay

CT: based on how this is written pertaining to 4th graders, does it impact them

JT: it would be their choice;

JT: okay with proposal if starts with 7-year-olds; not a lot of cause for change for existing players

Parent: "tournaments want to see birth certificates, not report cards, so if that's what tournaments do, then that's what we should do". All-stars should be competitive. "If you want to play with your friends, that's what in-house is for". "If they're looking at birth certificates then why would we go by grade"?

JT: original thought a few years ago was that we want the kids to play with their grade to keep 7th/8th grade players together for the purpose of Middle School ball

JVL: a lot of concern around 10U/11U teams – if this doesn't pass, these kids don't have opportunity and no all-star team; this will allow kids to play a third year of minor

Parent: lower kids – great participation/lots of kids; sees both sides of the coin; sees benefit of playing with age and desire for kids to be able to play with friends; not sure where changing or not changing is best; just wants to field a team for the kids that want to play; whatever is decided, we need to be able to have teams/opportunity to play; maybe a combination of the two that makes it work

JVL: a shame that 10U wasn't able to field a team; not a good look for KYB; we need to work hard to be able to field a team at every grade level

Parent/past board member: Problems prior to rule change (grade level): we had teams that were recruiting/taking kids from different age groups; decision was made to help cut some of that out; certain teams that were really good and really weak because kids were playing up; losing age groups and when choice was made, we found that it was challenging because kids were playing up; this team lost 3 players; we were trying to eliminate the gray areas; really confusing and some coaches that were purposely trying to get kids to build a "super team" and impacted all kids; can touch 3 grades with 1 age group. Opportunity to cut gray/keep kids from jumping around; not saying there was a right or wrong; if had to do it again, would make it fresh/start from age 7 rather than disrupt current players

Parent: had a whole team come to a meeting about the anticipated change to grade based and the board still voted to make the change

JB: if you want changes, please volunteer; if you have complaints, please volunteer/run for a position; the problem is that no one volunteers; all Board members are volunteers and trying to do what is best for all of the kids wanting to play baseball

AS: "we're not always right, but we do the best we can"

Parent: voiced that either way has pros and cons; parents aren't going to say they want their child to play down; proposal only says young kids' abilities aren't there, get to go down and play, but this is taking an opportunity from someone; who would send their kid down if he can make the team of their grade

JB: new proposal allows to go up OR down, rather than HAVING to play with grade; proposal creates flexibility

Parent: agrees with age-based proposal IF implemented for kids coming up/young kids, but shouldn't implement for kids that have already formed a rapport with one another on existing teams; if you go by what parents want, if you have 15 kids and 7 want age and 8 want grade, who gets priority?

Board: its ability/evaluations based on skill

MH: 13 kids ages 11, 10, 9, 8 who would have a “choice” to play grade level (proposal impacts an average of 3 kids per class)

Parent: it doesn’t matter what you do, there are going to be parents that are upset; if it’s not a headache now, this is creating headaches for the future

JB: it should go DOB and evaluations

CW: it comes down to the players’ talent and how old they are; it’s the coaches’ job to make players better, not take them from other teams; we should go by ability and birth year

MH: in the past there had been poor drafting/evaluations – very lopsided; the Board has worked hard to improve the evaluation process and avoid a super team and allow for good competition with leagues around us

Parent: I will do anything and everything I can to have a team; recruiting, answering questions, etc.

AS: would this proposal help 11U?

Parent: Yes, would help 4 kids; this allows more options

Player ability is a huge factor; I see benefit with my players/families I coach; had 4-5 kids that couldn’t play this year and this proposal would help prevent that from happening again

AS: doesn’t effect a huge group, but gives choices

Parent: “giving choices is bad”

Parent: what if all of this is done and we still don’t have a team, what is next step to try and form a team?

Parent response: “it puts it on the coach”

JT: likes proposal if started at 7U; voiced opinion that it could be a mistake to make change now

Parent: aren’t you changing all-star process now? If so, then now would be the time to change since revamping the process. May as well do it all now.

JT: will be voted on next meeting

Parent: in regards to 9U age group, we have B and C teams and the C team is working out very well – moving forward, these evals are coming up (evals didn’t really happen last year) and now that kids are happy where they are, are the evals really necessary, if satisfied on C team? Giving opportunity to continue playing together would be beneficial.

AS: I believe we have to have evals based on our bylaws, but what happens is we have the kids’ scores so we can predict what we think might be a team, but coaches determine what they want to do, so technically have to do evaluations

Parent: part of great thing about having so many kids is them having the desire to get better; tryouts/evaluations are important to help kids have the desire to get better

Parent: we want to be able to stick together as a team, but we don’t want them to be complacent with C either

JH: we want to do everything we can to have more than 1 team – dispel rumors that we don’t want two teams

CW: if you hear a rumor, don’t wait until a meeting to inquire about it – reach out to the Board – if there are issues, please bring them up – we want to hear feedback

Parent: as a group, what do we do to market new players for coming in? CT has a billboard and yard signs. Butler Twp used to do the same thing. Problems with all organizations, so there may be a group of kids in a surrounding area that may be looking to come our way to play

JT: ARL doesn't allow cross-over for in-house for over age 10, so can't advertise to surrounding areas; "outsiders" can't take the place of a Knoch player

CT: would be helpful if not going to have a team

Parent: concerned about the July 22 cutoff date – can we open it up longer to allow for time to recruit; can we run until end of fall ball

Board: we can if there are not enough kids, but other kids need to get rolling; no risk to signing up, as you have the choice to not follow through

JT presented voting options to parents in attendance:

1. Leave status quo-1 vote
2. Adopt age-based placement policy now-2 votes
3. Adopt age-based placement policy beginning with age 7 – 9 votes

CW: JB Orris (son goes to Knoch) has a 15 U traveling team and he used our field this week for an evaluation. He is interested in hosting a tourney at our field next year – what would we charge? – he would like to do the tourney when another group is also having a tourney to pack the park – he's looking for a field for his 15U team to practice on Sundays when they're not in tourneys. It would be good to get players on that field. Mr. Orris also offered to help with maintenance and he has included SABA on their insurance. What would it cost to get them under our insurance as well and charge one price to use fields all year/have them on our website for scheduling (KYB takes priority). This could be a good opportunity for KYB. We should think about a fair fee for field utilization. Mr. Orris is not looking to make money – he says anything made above expenses will be donated to KYB

AS – are we collecting registration to see where interests lie for 13-year team? Confusing about whether there will be a team

JT ended meeting at 9:35 pm.

Next meeting (Open): August 6, 6:00 PM @ Laura J Doerr upper pavillion