



2023 Western Counties Baseball

RIVER LEAGUE NEWSLETTER

Updates/Changes

To all WCBA River League Locals

The W.C.B.A River League Committee wanted to reach out to all participating locals about changes and updates to our River League System. As we all know this division of WCBA is very important and since its inception has allowed all locals with the opportunity to play outside their own center against other small town house league teams in a fun, easy going atmosphere where the game of baseball can be played, developed in a not so competitive environment. It allows both players and coaches to enjoy the game and still have structure of a schedule, playing rules, organization and competition. For many years the River League was very open to allowing teams, divisions to somewhat create their own rules both on field play and schedules/tournaments etc. Over the years rules have been modified, changed and now today resemble more of an OBA setting with the exception of run caps, certain on field rules as well roster requirements. This has led to many debates, discussions on where we want to see River League go and how we want to get there.

With any organization it takes volunteers to make it happen and unfortunately over time the amount of volunteer support has dwindled, people have retired, their kids grew up or don't play anymore, people have come and gone. It's these volunteers that have made it possible to offer support for all the different age group divisions, tournaments, league convening etc. that a typical baseball league requires. This past season there has only been two convenors for five divisions and a third volunteer to help with the logistics and backend support. Many of us are on the WCBA OBA committee as well as our own Local Association Boards and the workload has increased to a point where if we do not get any additional volunteer support, we will suffer in multiple areas. This could include no league or division convenor which in turn means no support, no organization from a WCBA end on league schedule, tournament organization, rule clarification, issues and so on. We do not want this to happen so we are asking all centers for some support, it could be a parent, a coach, a manager, spouse, family member, anyone. Although knowledge of the game is an asset it is in no way a requirement as the biggest need is helping keep the divisions organized and communication shared so there is a contact point for each division. We also need volunteers to help with the committee itself where rules and other decisions are made that make River League operate. The committee meets by zoom periodically and communicates through text/email majority of the time. There is only one in person meeting required and that's the kickoff, coaches scheduling meeting in the spring. There is always support from a technical side for rule clarification when needed so there should be no fear if knowledge of the rules is not completely understood.

We also had some issues last season with divisions running different style formats for their tournaments including running full week or multi week "End of year" tournaments. Due to weather, diamond scheduling and umpire support this turned into a mess quickly and will not be permitted this season in any age group. The End of the year tournament in each division will take place one of two weekends with one backup weekend scheduled. If the tournament doesn't take place due to weather etc. the tournament will be canceled.

Playing Rules have mimicked OBA in the past with much success, the rules are laid out clearly on the OBA ONDeck App and can be referenced easily when needed. However, the ability for two opposing coaches to agree to their own set of rules at the pregame home plate meeting will still be permitted if both coaches and umpires agree. This allows teams

the ability to play the game properly if special circumstances apply for example only such as overage/underage players pitching, catching etc. The ability for River League teams to allow not so stingy rules on these types of situations is what makes River League succeed and, in the past, has even allowed centers to field a team when otherwise would not be permitted. This flexibility will always be a top priority as in many cases it means a player having the opportunity to play or not. This is just an example of why each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If the situation is being taken advantage of then it will be addressed accordingly. Also please note while on this topic specifically *A player pitching or catching must play by their own age requirements in terms of arm care rules, not the division they are playing in.* This rule is an OBA rule but mainly a safety rule and in no situation can this be ignored regardless of what coaches agree on.

NEW to River League- AWARDS

Going forward WCBA will provide the winning team in each division with individual awards for each player on the team, this could be a medal, trophy, or another type of award. More to come on this topic.

Some key points/ changes for the upcoming 2023 Season

- OBA SELECT HOUSE LEAGUE TOURNAMENTS and PROVINCIALS will be discussed as an option this year to all our participants. There will be an opportunity for WCBA to help provide financial support to a team that could represent us as well provide feedback on these events.
- OBA "Select" Division playing rules including Pitch Counts with the exception of overage players/and run caps (will be discussed at scheduling meeting in spring.)
- Fees increase from \$50.00 to \$100 per team. This will include end of the year awards as well as the cost of lineup cards which will be handed out.
- Line Up cards will be issued and expected to be used this season for all games.
- No division convenor volunteer will mean no "End of the year tournament" or support from a WCBA standpoint.
- If no host steps up by July 1 of that season there will be no "End of the year tournament" as well.
- The host will pick the weekend for the tournament but will be either the 1st or 2nd weekend of August. If your team cannot compete for any reason (vacations etc.) your team will be excluded.
- If there are too many teams in a division the league can be split into two, a North and South Division. This will allow for less travel and less teams in any tournaments. If we want to have a champions tournament for the winners of each division that can be accommodated by convenor with some scheduling requirements.

So lastly we are calling on all participating River League locals to put forth one volunteer to help this upcoming season with our committee. If we do not get the support needed, we run the risk of not having the ability to properly operate a full baseball season for our teams and players. All interested parties please send an email to our WCBA/River League Secretary/registrar at westerncountiessecretary@gmail.com at your earliest convenience so we can get started on the upcoming season preparations.

Sincerely,

WCBA River League Committee