

Call to order at 8 pm. Meeting conducted virtually. (notes summarized and generated by AI)

- **Board Vacancies and Leadership Appointments:**
 - Karl Kemp officially nominated and confirmed as Vice President
 - **21+ Division Representative Vacancy:** Tim Biggs stepped down as the 21+ division representative, prompting the need for a new rep. Nominees for the position included Tim Saunders (Blue Crabs), Chris Braden (Angels), and Austen Brandt (Orioles). The group planned to vote on the primary and secondary representatives (vote still needed)
- **New Initiatives and League Updates for 2026:** Mike and Patrick introduced several new initiatives for 2026, including switching to a higher-quality MLB spec baseball, budgeting for championship rings, potential earlier season start, expanded field access, and a new Hall of Fame chair, with Jason Tores volunteering to lead the committee.
 - **New Baseball Adoption:** The league will switch to an MLB spec baseball for the 2026 season, having secured a favorable deal. The new balls feature thinner, flush seams, addressing previous concerns about seam quality. The balls have already been ordered and received.
 - **Championship Rings:** The league will provide championship rings or a stipend toward them for division champions starting in 2026, supplementing the existing t-shirt awards. The rings are customizable and can be produced and shipped within two to three weeks.
 - **Field Access and Improvements:** Expanded use of Glen Burnie and Severn Run fields is planned, with Glen Burnie now having lights and Severn Run reopened after renovations. The league is also seeking access to additional fields like Crofton and Chesapeake, and is supporting field improvements at Meade under new head coach Joe Dimonda.
 - **Hall of Fame Committee:** Jason Tores volunteered to take over as Hall of Fame chair, with plans to form a committee to review and vote on candidates using the league's established rubric. The committee will engage the league and publicize the process.
- **Whole League Rule Proposals and Voting Outcomes:** Mike, Patrick, and league members discussed and voted on several rule proposals affecting the entire league, including age eligibility, courtesy runner rules, tiebreaker clarifications, playoff eligibility, and the potential formation of a 32+ division or an A/B/C split for the 21+ group.
 - **Age Eligibility Rule:** The group voted to revert to the previous standard for age eligibility, allowing players who turn the minimum age by December 31st to participate in their respective divisions. For the 45+ Division, players turning 45 in the calendar year do not count towards an exemption. The rule clarifies that exempt players cannot pitch, and the website will be updated accordingly.
 - **Courtesy Runner Rule Changes:** Two courtesy runner proposals were discussed: allowing refusal of a courtesy runner without losing the option later (passed narrowly), and formally allowing courtesy runners for pitchers and

catchers at any time (passed with strong support). Clarifications were provided regarding the interaction with line sharing.

- **Tiebreaker and Forfeit Rule Adjustments:** The league agreed to use average runs scored and allowed per game, excluding forfeits, for tiebreakers. For playoff eligibility, a new rule was adopted where forfeits only count as a player's fifth game played, preventing players from qualifying for playoffs by only attending one game due to excessive forfeits.
- **32+ Division and A/B/C Split Discussion:** Interest was gauged for restarting a 32+ division, but concerns were raised about the impact on existing teams. Motion to adopt the 32+ was rejected. The alternative of splitting the 21+ group into A, B, and C divisions was discussed, with the goal of balancing competition and providing appropriate levels for teams. Final decision pending until the number of teams is finalized.
- **Forfeit Policy Reforms and Enforcement:** Mike, Patrick, and league members enacted stricter forfeit policies for 2026, including reducing allowable forfeits, consequences for teams removed due to forfeits, draft pick penalties, and manager restrictions for repeated forfeiting.
 - **Reduction of Allowable Forfeits:** The allowable number of forfeits per team was reduced from four to three, with enforcement beginning in 2026. Teams reaching three forfeits in a season will be removed from the league without refunds.
 - **Consequences for Removed Teams:** Teams removed for excessive forfeits will forfeit their first-round draft pick if they return the following season, placing them at the bottom of the draft order. The group rejected the idea of imposing fines.
 - **Manager Restrictions for Repeat Offenders:** A new rule was adopted stating that if a team hits the forfeit limit in two consecutive years, the manager will not be allowed to return in that role the following year, encouraging better team management and commitment.
 - **Player Reassignment After Team Removal:** Questions were raised about players on removed teams, with the current policy allowing players to join another team in a different age division if eligible, but not within the same division for that season.
- **21+ Division Structure and Player Eligibility:** Discussion for the structure of the 21+ division, including the formalization of A, B, and C divisions, eligibility for players over 35 to play in both A and B, and debated rules regarding former professional players in lower divisions.
 - **A/B/C Division Framework:** The group agreed to move forward with an A, B, and C division structure for the 21+ group, provided there are enough teams. The C division would be standalone with its own playoffs, and players in A and B would not be eligible for C.
 - **Eligibility for Over-35 Players:** A rule was formalized allowing players over 35 to participate in both A and B divisions, unless a separate 32+ division is

created (which it was not). This aims to provide flexibility for older players seeking different competition levels.

- **Former Professional Player Restrictions:** Extensive debate occurred regarding restrictions on former professional players in B and C divisions. While some advocated for limits (e.g., no ex-pros in C, limited in B), others preferred to maintain the current county rule (one year from release). No consensus was reached, and the issue may be revisited if needed.
- **Draft and Tryout Implications:** Questions were raised about how the new division structure would impact tryouts and the draft process, with the decision deferred until team numbers are finalized closer to the spring.
- **45+ Division Structure and Player Eligibility**
 - Proposal to eliminate the Silver Bracket Championship was adopted. There will no longer be a 7th place extra game with trophy presentation.
 - No changes to player exceptions or age were adopted. Teams will continue to be allowed to have 3 exemption players that are age 42 or older. In conjunction age eligibility rule. Ex. If player is currently 41 and the turned 42 in the calendar year. This player can still be eligible as an exemption player.
- **Additional League Operations and Miscellaneous Topics:** Participants addressed various operational topics, including game length, roster size, playoff tiebreakers, Hall of Fame nominations, field assignments, and game time consistency, with input from Chris Vanderbosch, Alex, Ron, Danny, and others.
 - **Game Length and Umpire Constraints:** A proposal to move all games to nine innings was rejected due to umpire contract limitations and scheduling constraints, with seven-inning games remaining standard except for playoffs.
 - **Roster Size Policy:** The current roster size is set at 26 players, reduced from 28 to prevent teams from hoarding players and to encourage more playing opportunities.
 - **Playoff Tiebreaker Procedures:** Discussion occurred about the use of the international tiebreaker in playoffs, with the current policy maintained due to time and field constraints.
 - **Hall of Fame Nominations:** Jason Tores will send out information on Hall of Fame nominations, encouraging managers to submit candidates and referencing the league bylaws for eligibility.
 - **Field Assignments and Game Times:** Danny and others discussed the need for consistency in weekday game times and field assignments, with the group noting that some timing is dictated by county field availability and local conditions.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Hall of Fame Committee Formation:** Form a Hall of Fame committee and establish ground rules for candidate selection and voting, then send out an official communication to league members requesting nominations. (Jason Tores)

- **Field Assignment Accountability:** Send an email listing available fields that need team assistance for maintenance and accountability, and request volunteers for field management for next season. (Mike L, Patrick)
- **Draft and Tryout Process for New Divisions:** Determine and communicate how tryouts and draft order will be handled if the league splits into A, B, and C divisions, including the impact on player eligibility and draft picks. (Mike L)
- **Division Structure Options:** Review and consider alternative division and playoff structures (e.g., point system, internal playoffs) based on suggestions from Danny and others, and circulate options before the spring meeting. (Danny)
- **Game Time Consistency:** Review and propose options for consistent weekday game start times across fields, considering county restrictions and field availability, and add this topic to the spring meeting agenda. (Mike L, Patrick)
- **Hall of Fame Candidate List:** Send Jason Tores the current list of manager emails to facilitate Hall of Fame nominations and voting. (Mike)

Meeting Adjourned at 10 PM by League President Mike Largent

Minutes submitted by Patrick Miller, League Secretary and approved by League President.