



7th Inning STRETCH



Official Publication of Kansas Babe Ruth Leagues, Inc.

BOB WILLIS—STATE COMMISSIONER
PAUL UNRAU-CAL RIPKEN STATE COMMISSIONER

Babe Ruth Volunteers are the BEST

Kansas Babe Ruth experienced another great year in 2018. The chief reason for our achievements is the volunteers who work tirelessly to insure that the Babe Ruth program remains the BEST youth program in the state. The purpose of this article is to recognize and thank the many volunteers who continue to make things happen in our program. Our volunteers are the BEST.

In our state, there are many areas that are untapped by Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken baseball, and it is the duty of each of us to seek contacts in those areas and show our program and its many benefits and advantages over the other programs. The northern half of the state remains the most fertile area for growth. If you know of leagues that are not affiliated or play independent programs, please provide your District Commissioner or other board members with those contacts. Then, we can approach them and inform them about Kansas Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken baseball.

All of the Tournament Directors of

the 2018 tournaments worked hard to make sure their tournaments were first class events that will be remembered for years to come by all who participated in them. Tournament Directors work diligently, devoting many hours before their tournament starts. Once their tournament begins, they meet the high standards we have come to know and experience in the Kansas tournament trail. State Tournament Directors for the 2018 season were: **Jim Pittman**, Liberal (16-18), **Jared Rutti**, Garden City (13-15), **Wade Beal**, Harper (9 and 10), **Jordan Niegsch**, Frontenac (11, 12-60 and 14), **Clint Saporito**, Columbus (13), **Tanner Ford**, Wellington (11, 12-70) Regional Tournament Directors were **Jared Rutti**, Garden City (10 Year-Old), and **Dottie Kell**, Junction City (13-15). Many thanks to all for outstanding efforts.

Experience has shown that if volunteers know what the expectations are, as far as tournament events and pageantry, they generally exceed those expectations. It is always re-

markable how the smaller towns pull together and make our tournaments “community events”. So many memories were created that will last a lifetime, and so many new friends were made that will result in long-lasting relationships. It bears repeating that the Babe Ruth Program is one big family which grows and gets better each year. Our volunteers are dedicated and rarely receive the recognition they deserve. But, they don’t do it for the recognition—they do it because they love the game of baseball and the young people who participate in it, and they believe in the Babe Ruth Baseball concept. Our District Commissioners and Assistant State Commissioners also work very hard and log in many hours during the entire year to make our program the best it can be. THANKS to all of our volunteers for making Kansas Babe Ruth Baseball special.

YOU ARE THE GREATEST!!

Classic XX Recognizes Talented 15 Year-Olds

Players, coaches and fans experienced the hospitality and friendly citizens of Council Grove when they arrived on Saturday, August 11 to participate in the 20th annual Classic, showcasing outstanding 15 year-olds from all over the state. After two hours of practice, the participants and families enjoyed a barbecue picnic and swimming at the Aquatic Center. Sunday’s events began with a photo session, followed by a ceremony honoring each player and coach who received special plaques commemorating this prestigious and special event.

Pat Lemmons, Assistant State Commissioner-14 Year-old Division, managed the Blue team with

help from coaches Kyle LeRoy of Larned and John Gingraux from Haysville. Managing the Red team was Assistant State Commissioner 11-12(60) Division, Dennis Nevin. His coaching staff included Ron Warren from Liberal and Bob Killion of Ft. Scott.

The Red Team won the first game by a score of 11-10 in extra innings and the second game by a 9-3 margin. Players on both teams had a great time and were afforded the opportunity to meet players from other teams and parts of the state during the two days.

Players are selected at their respective district tournaments based on their playing ability and sportsman-

ship. Coaches are nominated by their District Commissioners, and the managers are on a rotational basis of Kansas Babe Ruth Leagues, Inc. Board of Directors.

A special thanks to Mark Brooks for organizing this prestigious event, Justin Carlson, Council Grove Recreation Director, who served as Tournament Director and maintained the fields during the event, the Council Grove City Commissioners, the citizens of Council Grove, the Rotary Club and the community of Council Grove for all of their hard work and support in making Classic XX a special and memorable event for all participants.

Volume IX, Issue 3
October 10, 2018

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2018 State Babe Ruth Tournament Results

Age Division	Location	Champion	Sportsmanship Award
13's	Columbus	Liberal	Liberal
14's	Frontenac	Girard	Chanute
13-15's	Garden City	Larned	Clearwater
16-18's	Liberal	Parsons	Independence

2018 State Cal Ripken Tournament Results

Age Division	Location	Champion	Sportsmanship Award
9's	Harper	Parsons	Little Sunflower
10's	Harper	Harper	Finney County
11(60)	Frontenac	Frontenac	Parsons
11(70)	Frontenac	Frontenac	Arma
12(60')	Wellington	Liberal	Wellington
12(70')	Wellington	Finney County	Medicine Lodge

Midwest Plains Regional Tournaments

Kansas hosted two Midwest Plains Regional tournaments in 2018. Garden City hosted the 10 Year-Old Division and Junction City hosted the 13-15 Division.

The tournaments showcased some outstanding teams and spectacular plays as well as demonstration of good sportsmanship by many teams and players alike.

The 10 Year-Old Tournament was won by West Fargo, North Dakota as they defeated Waite Park, Minnesota by a score of 7-6 in the championship game. West Fargo also won the Norm and Colleen Travis Sportsmanship Award.

In the 13-15 tournament, the championship game was also a close nail-biter as Albany, Minnesota edged out Charles-

ton, Missouri by a 2-1 margin. The host team Junction City, won the Norm and Colleen Travis Sportsmanship Award.

In 2019, Kansas will host the 9 Year-Old and 14 Year-Old Midwest Plains Regional Tournaments. Mark your calendar and plan to attend one or both of these great tournaments to observe the talents of our midwestern athletes.

Charter Early-Avoid the Rush

Leagues may charter online beginning in January 2019. By then, League officers should have received correspondence about the chartering process for the upcoming year. Also, the the Chartering and Insurance Brochures are available online or have been sent to you earlier. The chartering process sets into action many activities to prepare you for the new season. Obviously, most leagues do not know their numbers by then,

but you can charter based on last year's numbers and adjust those numbers when your league has their sign-ups. Also, if you have insurance through Babe Ruth, the coverage expires January 31, so you will want to charter before then to continue your coverage. If you have any problems getting online or entering your data, contact headquarters. They will help you or walk you through the process. The goal at head-

quarters is to help league officials as much as possible to get their charters and rosters completed online as early as possible. Then each league can concentrate on administering their program, playing their games and doing everything else that is required to run their program. Waiting until the last minute often causes undue confusion and headaches for all parties.



“Just as baseball is the sport of families there is one baseball family. We ardently believe that the baseball family includes the fans, coaches, administrators and youth players of the Babe Ruth League and at all levels in the many communities where our game is played and enjoyed. Major League Baseball commends all of the Babe Ruth Baseball’s participants.”

Rob Manfred, Commissioner of Baseball

If you have a smartphone, you can download a free barcode reader app. and scan the QR code below to access the *Bullpen* archives.



Cal Zone by Cal Ripken Commissioner Paul Unrau

Local Organized Youth Baseball vs “Travel Ball”

Why should we be concerned about the current state of youth baseball? Let’s look at what’s happening in America.

We hear all the time how travel ball provides better competition, more games, better coaching, and more exposure. These may or may not be accurate, but this is what we do know. Local league youth baseball programs provide many great benefits. The local programs are open to all. They are open to the skilled and lesser skilled, the little kid and the early developer, the family with limited financial resources and those with plenty to spend, teams that represent a large portion of the community with local players and local coaches, local community involvement, and they do a decent job of putting the player first (making it for the kids and about the kids).

On the other hand, travel ball is a select group of players assembled to travel once or twice a week to select tournaments around the state or region to compete with other travel teams. These teams include players who

- Have come from a family financial situation that can afford a handsome seasonal participation fee plus travel expenses of gasoline, hotel, food, and admission fees.

- Generally have advanced skill sets or potential athletic abilities to pursue

- Have no guarantee that they will remain on the team in good standing if they fail to perform or when a more lucrative player is available to “pick up”

- Must commit to many hours of travel and tournaments and strict commitment at a young age. Family time takes a loss.

What we really need to do is look at what our local leagues have to offer; especially our Babe Ruth and Cal Ripken leagues. *The Babe Ruth and Cal Ripken (BR/CR) baseball and softball programs are all about putting the player first.* All-comers are welcome to participate. Teams are divided fairly to provide for good competition and opportunity to every player to play. BR/CR programs care about the health and safety of its players; pitch counts and equipment standards to name a couple. The leagues provide local league play and then a true tournament trail at the end of the local league season. Participation in a BR/CR post season tournament is started at the league/district level. To advance on the tournament trail to state, regional and World Series, a team must qualify by winning the previous level championship. There are no buy-ins, no picking up of super stars and no cost to the participant in tournament entry fees. The BR/CR program is based on *opportunities for all.*

There are those who say the local programs don’t provide enough games per season. In some cases that may be the case, but the number of games played in the league is a league option. If a local league team wants to play more games and play against different competition, they have the option to go play in “travel” team tournaments in addition to their league games. But by staying within the league program BR/CR provide the best of both local league and “travel ball”. Staying within the local structure provides opportunities for everyone and provides more for those who want more. Each community deserves to have a local program not just travel teams made up of some local players and other players from other various locations. By taking the “best” players from a community to play travel ball diminishes the total number of local participants and can totally ruin the local league and the desires of the average player to play baseball or softball.

In addition, a player first program within Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken :

- Has no player recruitment

- Has no players cut

- Allows league modifications to accommodate player participation numbers

- Allows CR players to move to older age divisions according to skill level

- Gives every player recognition at each game in each tournament level on the tournament trail

- Gives player awards at each game in each tournament on the tournament trail

- Has a tournament trail for each age division

And last but not least, *promotes personal character growth by emphasizing the character traits in the Babe Ruth League Sportsmanship Code which is read by players at each tournament game and modeled by coaches and league officials.*



If you know of any new leagues that are interested in Babe Ruth Softball, please have them contact Mark Donley, Kansas Softball Commissioner at (316)655-8113 or by e-mail at markdonley@hotmail.com

Proposed Tournament Dates for 2019

	District Ending Date	State Tournament	MWP Region Tournament	World Series (includes travel)
Rookie		None	Missouri July 17-21	Treasure Coast, FL TBA
9 Year-Olds	July 8	Harper July 11-14	Frontenac, KS July 17-21	Treasure Coast, FL TBA
10 Year-Olds	July 7	Ft. Scott July 10-14	Fargo, ND July 17-21	Phenix City, AL July 30-Aug 8
11(60')	July 8	TBA	none	NONE
11(70')	July 8	Frontenac July 11-14	Waite Park, MN July 17-21	Treasure Coast, FL TBA
12(60')	July 8	TBA	None	Visalia, CA July 31-August 9
12(70')	July 8	Frontenac July 11-14	Chadron, NE July 17-21	Branson, MO July 31-Aug 10
13 Year-Olds	July 15	Lyons July 18-21	Colorado July 24-28	Westfield, MA Aug. 6-15
14 Year-Olds	July 15	Liberal July 17-20	Garden City, KS July 24-28	Demopolis, AL August 7-16
13-15 Year-Olds	July 14	Liberal July 17-21	Williston, ND July 24-28	Bismarck, ND August 6-15
16-18 Year-Olds	July 7	Columbus TBA	Charleston, MO July 17-21	Mobile, AL July 31-Aug 9

Softball

8U	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
10U	TBA	TBA	Iowa	TBA
12U	TBA	TBA	Girard, KS	TBA
14U	TBA	TBA	Columbus, KS	TBA
16U	TBA	TBA	Boonville, MO	TBA

We are on facebook. You can access Kansas Babe Ruth Leagues on facebook. Here you will be able to learn about happenings in Kansas and on the website tournament scores will be posted during the tournament trail.

www.kansasbaberuthleagues.com

Use the following link to access the Babe Ruth Chartering resource page:

<https://www.baberuthleague.org/getting-started.aspx>



7th Inning Stretch is the official newsletter of Kansas Babe Ruth Leagues, Inc. and is published three times a year (Spring, Summer and Fall), for all leagues and any party interested in Kansas Babe Ruth Baseball. Your input and comments are welcome and appreciated.