

## Norwich Recreation Council Meeting February 13, 2018

Present: Jill Kearney Niles, Jill Collins, Page Thompkins, Rob Johnson, Kristin Fauci, Gered Dunne

Guests: Bram Litvinoff, John Lobb, Robb Cramer, John-Mike Taylor, Philip McCaull

Minutes from last meeting were approved.

John Lobb reviewed that a group of coaches and parents have been continuing to discuss the baseball options since the Rec Council vote in October.

John discussed option of continuing Montshire League and suggested creating a board and writing bylaws where Norwich would be able to be in a Cal Ripken league under the Norwich Recreation umbrella.

There were concerns about travel distances. John stated that there would be enough teams in the local area to be able to play against. There is talk that some coaches in Hartford are trying to form a Ripken team but Hartford is planning to stick with Upper Valley Rec. If we went to Cal Ripken for 3/4 we could play Dresden in Hanover, Thetford, Lebanon and potentially scrimmage other teams from the UVRA league. Jill states that this Thursday there is an Upper Valley Recreation Association meeting, where she will find out which towns are doing which programs.

Robb Cramer states that  $\frac{3}{4}$  kids are driving this and coaches convinced kids to stay in Norwich Rec league last spring. Then summer baseball program was offered. This was very popular and most of the kids who played joined summer baseball. Kids are used to kid pitch and going with Norwich Rec causes them to go back to coach pitch. Now that baseball is getting closer, coaches met with other baseball parents and started a petition to try to get Norwich Rec to join Ripken league.

Page asked about batting order. Central Vermont league states that each team can decide how they want to do it at each game, until you get to larger league tournaments.

John Mike states that we always used to play Ripken and that each kid went through batting order following the Norwich Recreation philosophy.

Jill Collins voiced concern that there is a difference between rec sports and club sports and we want to give all kids the opportunity to play. The Norwich Recreation Guidelines of equal playing time would still be followed.

John states that if we go with Montshire we can keep things the way that we want, as it would be our own league.

What is the difference in cost?

Ripken fees: \$120 per team, approx. \$10 per kid; broken down as follows:

Coach certification: \$20 per coach

Charter: \$15

Insurance: \$70-80 per team

Ripken would be \$10 more per kid than Upper Valley League

Historically, back when Everett Logan was involved Norwich Recreation played Cal Ripken.

Robb and John discussed how all new kids coming in to baseball will be included in learning pitching, hitting and catching, so the third graders will learn to pitch.

Stealing bases is permitted in Cal Ripken for the 3/4 level as well as 5/6.

Jill K suggested keeping 5/6 in the Upper Valley League and start with just switching the 3/4 level to Cal Ripken. Depending on the outcome of the UVRA meeting this Thursday, alternatively we could move 5/6 to Cal Ripken as well if there weren't enough local teams to play. Jill doesn't foresee this happening though.

Page stated that he is not as concerned about the rules but more about the spirit of recreation sports and including all kids no matter their skill level. Coaches assured the group that this is how they operate.

Girls are still welcome to play in Cal Ripken - it is coed. There are some families (Starosta) that are interested in starting a 5/6 Softball team.

Philip discussed how through his experience in Norwich Rec, it is more about the coaches and their personal philosophies rather than the rules.

John states that their goal is to include Rec. Dep't guidelines and philosophy in the set up of the program.

Jill Collins discussed the goal of Norwich Rec for programs to stay non-competitive so that all kids can learn to love sport and it is important to us, as a Rec department to keep with that goal.

John discussed how they will need umpires in Cal Ripken, whereas Upper Valley did not have to have umpires.

The coaches would like to have two 3rd/4th grade teams, which would be split evenly. Jill K states that she had planned to buy jerseys for the 3/4 Baseball team(s) this year.

Coaches would like to move the 5/6 group to Ripken next year, also, for continuity. Rules for 5/6 are virtually the same in both Ripken and UVRA leagues. Currently one difference is the type of bats. USSA bat standard: Altered metal bats to be more like wood bats. Bats have less recoil. Easier to hit the ball. Also safer for the kids.

The Rec Council discussion ensued and Rec Council members brought up some concerns. They felt that Jill K-N should continue to choose/sign off on coaches for the Cal Ripken league, and Council members voiced concerns again, that coaches should follow the rec philosophy. Montshire by-laws should include rec philosophy

**Page moved that:**

Because the organizing group did the hard work of building consensus of people interested in baseball

Because of their expressed commitment to athletes that are new to the sport

Because of their commitment to a continuous batting lineup and assurances that there will be equal playing time for all players,

We approve the Norwich Recreation collaboration with the Montshire Baseball Association to offer Cal Ripken baseball.

Contingent upon assurances that the Norwich Recreation Department will select or approve coaches

Contingent upon the Montshire Baseball Association collaborating with the Norwich Rec Department as we develop our philosophy statement on coaching recreation programs.

Vote was taken and the group unanimously accepted the above motion.  
Note that although absent at the meeting, Bill Tine had given a prior yes vote and John Girard had abstained.

New Business:

Gered suggested a fundraiser skiing party at Huntley with hot chocolate in March to raise money for the snowmobile/ski tracking. Jill K will try to set up a meeting with Gered & Brie to discuss further.

Jill Collins made a second motion to table rest of agenda to next meeting.  
Motion was seconded.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm in Tracy Hall