

# 2022-2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

The report will cover the period November 1, 2022 to October 31, 2023 and will highlight initiatives and activities approved by the Board and completed by the staff of St. John's Minor Baseball Association (SJ MBA) that are above and beyond the normal day to day scope of work.

### ADMINISTRATION

This was the 4th full season that I took on the role as Executive Director.

Our first 'grant worker' started on May 16th, 2023

#### *Grant Workers*

SJ MBA had an decrease in grant student numbers compared to 2022, but an increase in funding amounts:

Canada Summer Jobs	13 (3 less than 2022)
NL Post-Secondary	4 (1 more than 2022)
NL High School	13 (1 less than 2022)

#### **Total 30**

*It is important to note that these jobs are becoming increasingly difficult to fill. Students are not wanting to work 20 plus hours each work and that has become a strain on the association during hiring time.*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In February we held our Annual General Meeting and elected a new Board. Nikki Musseau was voted into the Vice-President's role for a 2 year term. We then elected 5 at large officers to 2 year terms (Paul Currie, Mark Healy, Michelle Healy, Cole MacIsaac and Krista Rice).

### PROGRAMS

2022-2022 was another busy year. Our registration numbers continued to hold steady which has been positive to see.

#### *Winter Ball*

In mid-November we opened On-line registration. This was our 10th year under the current structure. In short, Mark Healy plans, staffs and executes the program. We are responsible for all administrative requirements, rent the facility and provide the equipment.

Winter Ball was well attended given the multitude of training opportunities that exist in the Metro region. Comparative numbers to 2018-2023 are shown below:

Session 1				Session 2		
	House League	All Star	Female	House League	All Star	Female
2018	121	101	0	132	110	38
2019	113	100	36	113	122	42
2020	92	69	47	95	90	40
2021	67	50	40	68	53	46
2022	91	20	26	115	42	33
2023	73	46	25	115	79	42

The program consisted of two 7-week segments with two 90 minute sessions (one for House and one for all-star players). We charged \$225 per player per session (\$400 for two sessions). Attendance was open to players from all baseball associations in the region. The female program consisted of two 7-week segments. We charged the same amount per player as the Friday session. Winter Ball was a success in all aspects given the increased stress put on the association to conduct the programs, as well as an increase in competition for training programs throughout the region. We dropped some of our Techniplex time to mitigate the increase costs that we are facing to run this program. We have not increased registration for Winterball since 2013.

In 2023, we continued doing specialty camps. The goal of these camps is to provide specialized small group training in response to our membership asking for such programming. These camps were designed as short term, 90 minute sessions to target either offensive, pitching or defensive skills. Registration numbers were as follows:

	Offensive Nov 2022	Offensive Jan 2023	Pitching Oct 2022	Pitching Feb 2023	Pitching Apr 2023	Defensive Dec 2022	Defensive Mar 2023
Early Session	20	10	12	12	9	21	10
Late Session	10	4	14	10	19	10	3

*Note that we did begin to offer drop in sessions to increase registration numbers. This allowed players to attend some nights but not all. These numbers are not reflected above but did help the overall sessions. In the summer, we sent out a survey to 2022/2023 participants and got significant feedback that time and location was a limiting factor from participation. Given the numbers challenge we had to run this program, we took a brief pause in the Fall of 2023. This program will be reevaluated in the future when we can more adequately meet the needs of our membership.*

### **School Tournaments**

In partnership with the NL English School Board and our colleagues from the other minor baseball associations on the Avalon Peninsula, SJMBA has assumed the lead role in conducting invitational school tournaments throughout the month of June. Simply put, without SJMBA these events would not happen. We are happy to say that we had a massive increase from 2022 and although these events are a lot of work, it is an enjoyable way to start the season. It is also a great way of early season umpire training and a financial generator for our programming.

Tournaments and Teams:

<b>Tournament</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Number of Teams</b>
Steve Phillips Classic	May 24-28	17 (+12 from 2022)
Junior High	May 24-28	13 (+3 from 2022)
Senior High	May 31-June 4	7 (+2 from 2022)
Junior High Girls	May 31-June 4	9 (+1 from 2022)
Sgt Geoff Walsh	June 8-11	47 (+10 from 2022)
Senior High Girls	June 12-18	5 (+1 from 2022)

## Registration

Our House League registration opened on Monday, April 7/23 with full on-line registration and payment. We continued with the RAMP Registration software and expanded it to include coaching applications. It is obvious that we enjoy the best form of advertising – word of mouth. In most divisions, we had teams with 14-15 players.

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Rally Cap (5-7)	141	148	133	121	131
9U (8-9)	229	206	213	185	209
11U (10-11)	177	193	195	191	218
13U (12-13)	177	173	171	165	154
15U (14-15)	111	117	118	118	134
18U (16-18)	61	59	49	49	46
12U Female (10-12)	46	56	46	71	68
14U Female (13-14)	45	41	26		
17U Female (15-17)	15	25	31		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1002</b>	<b>1018</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>960</b>

Note that 17U female is based on age for 2023, not the division. These players were primarily the 16U all-star team that played in the 15U house league. SJMBA is committed to the resurgence of the 17U (or 18U) female regional league in 2024.

## ALL STAR PROGRAM

### *Selection – Coaches-Teams*

In April, the All-star Committee chaired by Danny Penton sent out an Expression of Interest (EOI) document re: coaching one of our all-star teams. Although it was a lengthy process, we staffed all teams with experienced coaches. We continued our policy that if a parent was selected to coach, his/her coaching role was confirmed only after all players including his/her son/daughter were selected, not vice-versa. Although a little cumbersome, this process helps us to further demonstrate transparency and equity in the selection process.

SJMBA fielded 19 all-star teams in 2023 in the following divisions:

11U A Red – Provincial T2 Champions	11U A Black – Provincial T1 Champions	11U AA – Did Not Qualify	11U AAA - Provincial Champions
12U AA – Provincial Gold	12U A - Provincial Silver	13U A Red - Did Not Qualify	13U A Black – Did Not Qualify

13U AA – Provincial Silver	13U AAA – Provincial Silver	14U AA – Did Not Qualify	14U A - Provincial Champions
15U A Black - Did Not Qualify	15U A Red – Provincial Silver	15U AA – Provincial Silver	15U AAA - Provincial Champions
16U - Provincial Silver	18U A - Did Not Qualify	18U AA - Did Not Qualify	

As Baseball NL introduced a new ranking system in 2023, this affected the placements of our teams at Provincial events which in some instances increased the overall competitiveness. Overall, mercy games were down 8% over the previous year which may continue to affect our teams in 2024.

In May, we conducted our all-star selection process. Once again, we engaged Mark Healy, as well as the All-Star committee to develop an evaluation matrix so that each player could be assessed in a transparent, equitable manner. We also continued the use of skill shark software to allow for better player tracking and monitoring. We asked the all-star coaching candidates to attend the try-out sessions for their age division. The all-star committee, in coordination with Ken, Mark Healy, select evaluators and myself went through the data to ensure we felt comfortable with results. After 2021, we deemed it prudent to make some changes to the selection meeting. We invited coaches whose kids were safely on a team to be a part of the conversation so as to not influence decision making. We also reached out to all coaches with their comments regarding what they say as tryouts, as well as referencing numbers/comments from coaches in the past season. While we always try to keep our approach current, our number one goal is to ensure all players have a fair chance regardless of their background and we are extremely proud of our commitment to this.

#### *Caps High Performance Program*

In 2020, we started our Caps High Performance Program with Premier Sports Academy. We continued this program in 2023. This consolidated program allowed all of our teams to receive consistent training with high frequency repetition. As the number of training programs continue to increase in the Metro region, we will re-evaluate the necessity of this program in the offseason to ensure that it's still meeting the goals of our teams.

#### *Metro League*

In 2023 with the addition of Paradise, MP, CBN and CBS teams, we produced full (12-14 games) hybrid schedules for the all-star teams in 11U, 13U and 15U. The competition was excellent and we received positive feedback from all associations. In 2023 the Metro area associations decided to hire a scheduler to help decrease the workload on SJMBA. While there were some kinks and growing pains, we do believe this will be very helpful as the role expands over the next few years. Finally, one issue that is consistently brought up by our membership

regarding Metro League is extending this to A and female teams. While this could be beneficial, there are several impacts on other leagues that need to be worked out first. Other associations are not interested in including A teams since they would not be able to run their house leagues without those players. This would mean our teams would exclusively play higher level competition. As well, we would need to acquire additional field time which is an annual challenge. Finally, extending this to female teams could be possible but we would need all of those players to exclusively play in that league. Currently, a lot of our female players play in multiple leagues which would not be possible. Looking forward, this is something that could be possible at the 12U level but currently our registration numbers for 14U and 17U are too low to support additional leagues. Our executive will continue to grow and support the regional interleague in 2024.

### *Female Teams*

Our female teams enjoyed tremendous success in 2023 capturing a medal in every Provincial event. There are some challenges with the female all-star program that are unique to this group, especially lack of diverse competition on the Avalon. Coaches will need to continue to be inventive to find suitable competition for these teams.

## **House League**

We tried a few changes in our House League program to improve the quality of competition, give the kids some additional AB's and cut down on the length of the games. We had a championship tournament for each division this year. As we did in 2022, we tiered the house league tournaments in 11U, 12U, 13U and 15U so that most teams played in medal games. We added tiered events in 14U this season as well. Each house League team were scheduled for a minimum of 18 games.

*Rally Cap Program* – For the first time in over 10 years, we added a team in Rally Cap for a total of 13 teams. These teams played over 4 nights each week. We received numerous compliments from parents and coaches. With that being said, there are always challenges with having younger staff and supporting their work. We will continue to work on their training in 2024. Although we had some weather issues with Night Under the Lights and the make-up session, it ended up being a great way to end the season. In 2020, we moved this program to Wishingwell to encourage physical distancing. This ended up working out great and will be continued in 2024.

*9U* – We continued with the Minor and Major 9U divisions in 2023. By all accounts this was a great switch as we had 8-9 teams in each division. There was meaningful competition in both divisions with some great feedback. I would recommend a slight re-alignment for 9U and Rally Cap in 2024 with the establishment of 5U (Rally Cap), 7U (Rally Cap hybrid) and 9U. In 2023, we played 4 nights a week at Virginia Park and Kelly's Brook under the guidance of various grant staff.

*11U* – We continued with 12 teams. Our goal for house league is for players to have fun and play with their friends. This is something that all coaches and parents should support as well. A

goal that the House League committee has for 2024 is to increase the quality of coaching in 11U which I believe will increase the caliber of play and make the players have more fun.

*13U* – 13U numbers remained steady in 2023. This prevented a lot of defaults. We had 10 teams. A goal that the House League committee has for 2024 is to increase the quality of coaching in 13U which I believe will increase the caliber of play and make the players have more fun.

*15U* – We had 6 teams (one of which was the Girls 16U team) which was one less than 2022. The league was very competitive but did suffer from some defaults, although less than 2022. We ended the season with a very successful John Wickham Memorial Championship tournament. With all divisions, but especially the older ones, the fall championship scheduling continues to be an issue. The house league committee will look at innovative ways to combat this in 2024.

*18U* – We attempted a realignment for 18U this year by separating the all-star teams from the house league teams. This meant there were 5 all-star teams and 5 house league teams in their respective leagues. This seemed to be a more effective approach than the past. While there are still some kinks to be worked out in terms of SJABA scheduling and field availability, 2023 was certainly a positive step forward for this age group.

*Female Divisions* - Our League of their Own Female Regional program had 2 divisions in 2023 - 12U and 14U. As stated previously, 17U was not possible due to other associations not having teams. The biggest concern for these divisions is adequate support and communication from other associations. This needs to be solved if we intend to keep a regional model instead of a St. John's only league similar to our other house league programs. Going forward, we will continue to tweak these age groups as the demand warrants to try and serve any female who wants to play baseball.

#### *House League Development Weekends*

In response to the needs of our house league players and our commitment to development, we introduced the developmental weekends in 2023. While the intentions were good, there are some issues to work through in terms of coaching, coach engagement, communication and registration that will need to be worked out before continuing with weekend sessions for house league.

#### *Drills & Skills Clinics*

We had another great season of our recently revamped drills and skills clinics. While there are some areas of improvement, Kyle McGrath and his team did a great job. In 2022, we also switched up our female program to bring it in line with the other clinics which seemed to be more popular. In 2024, we will look at providing more specialized training under the same model of morning sessions switching every week, including the female camp.

### *Special Events*

We had a busy year for special events! Events included the following:

Mike Buist Classic	July 14th to 16th	All fields	52 teams
18U Qualifier	August 4th to 6th	St. Pat's	5 teams
15U A Provincials	August 25th to 27th	APH/WW	9 teams
18U A Provincials	August 25th to 27th	St. Pat's	3 teams
13U AA Provincials	Sept 1st to 3rd	LSP	6 teams
16U AA Provincials	Sept 1st to 3rd	Airport Heights	3 teams
Night Under the Lights	Sept 9th	Little St. Pat's	13 teams

## **FINANCE**

As you will note in our financial statements, we had a healthy operating surplus in 2023. We do have some large capital projects on the horizon. We have currently invested \$30,000 of our own money in the purchasing of a scoreboard for Edgar Hartery and will look to install it in 2024 with some support from the community. We will also look to build upon the continual improvements done to the fields around the City of St. John's prioritizing those that are used most frequently, especially for special events. It is positive to see a strong financial position and we will continue to be financially conscious in our decisions while promoting growth of our program.

## **MARKETING-PR-CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP**

Given the uncertainty in our economy, sponsorships will continue to be a challenge. Thankfully, we did gain 2 new sponsors in Scotia Wealth Management and TD Bank. Welcome aboard! We are thankful you are our partner. We are also thankful for our continued support from Kirkland, Balsom & Associates!

## **THANK YOU AND CONCLUSIONS**

I assumed my role as Executive Director in November 2019 through some difficult circumstances. Unfortunately, most of my time in this position has been during a time of extreme hardship for our association. COVID-19 did help prove what we were capable of and I was proud to receive all of the positive comments about our program. As I move on to new opportunities, I want to express a sincere thank you to all of my co-workers over the past 12 years including Mike Buist, Frank O'Leary, Ryan Garland, Triffie Parsons, Scott Doody, Tyler



Coley, Robbie Morgan, Andrew Paul, Eric McKay, Alex Curtis, Madison Noseworthy, Molli Dillon and many, many more. I am hopeful and encouraged that the new energy and enthusiasm that will be brought to SJMBA in 2024 will go a long way in leading our association into the future. I also look forward to continuing to support the Mike Buist Classic in the future.

To our all-star and house league coaches, team managers and volunteers – Thank You! We could not offer our program without you.

To our student workers on grant and those whom are casual – your efforts are noticed and appreciated. Hope to see most of you back in 2024!

To our sponsors – Scotia Wealth Management, TD Bank and Kirkland, Balsom & Associates – thank you for your continued support. Your contributions to our program are immeasurable.

To the City of St. John's, especially the Parks staff – Carla Squires, Neil McKenzie, Travis Maher, Mike Adam, Leon Organ and all the guys and gals who work on our fields – a sincere thank you. Great job in 2023!

To the provincial MHA's who helped us with our student grants (John Abbott, Siobhan Coady, Bernie Davis, Tom Osbourne, Sarah Stoodley and John Hogan) and our federal MP's (Seamus O'Regan and Joanne Thompson) who approved our Canada Summer Job requests – thank you. Without both of these summer employment programs, we would not be able to offer the program we do.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kristyn Coley*

Executive Director - SJMBA