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# Vermont Senior Baseball News

The newsletter of the Vermont Senior Baseball League Inc., founded 1984 by Floyd Brown

A hardball league for age 35 and over that plays a safe, fun, and competitive game of baseball in an atmosphere of good sportsmanship

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edited by Mike Wagner

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## Results of Sunday, July 18, 2004:

Burlington 17, Caledonia 3  
Colchester 11, South Royalton 10  
Lake Region 3, Champlain 2  
Killington 4, Jericho 2  
Williston 4, Danville 1  
Barre 4, Newport 3  
St. Johnsbury 7, Montpelier 5  
Mad River Valley 7, Chelsea 6  
Northfield 7, Connecticut Valley 2  
Morrisville, bye

## Standings:

Team	W	L	Pct.	Games Behind
Barre	10	1	.909	-
Colchester	9	1	.900	0.5
Mad River Valley	9	1	.900	0.5
Williston	8	2	.800	1.5
Morrisville	7	2	.778	2
Jericho	6	3	.667	3
Lake Region	6	3	.667	3
Killington	7	4	.636	3
Chelsea	5	5	.500	4.5
St. Johnsbury	5	5	.500	4.5
Burlington	5	6	.545	5
South Royalton	5	6	.545	5
Newport	4	6	.400	5.5
Montpelier	3	7	.300	6.5
Northfield	2	8	.200	7.5
Danville	1	7	.125	7.5
Champlain	1	8	.111	8
Caledonia	0	9	.000	9
Connecticut Valley	0	9	.000	9

See page 5 for an explanation of the playoff and championship format

Got a computer? Check our web site at  
<http://baseball.neknetwork.com>

## League Founder Floyd Brown Honored



Floyd Brown, 77, who founded our league in 1984, was honored at the July 18 managers meeting. The league presented Floyd with a plaque in the shape of home plate and he also received a letter of appreciation from Steve Sigler, national President of the Mens Senior Baseball League (MSBL). For more about Floyd, see page 3.

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## Passed Ball Experiment Discussed at Midseason League Meeting

On Sunday, July 18, the annual midsummer league meeting was held in Williston, following that day's games.

There were lively discussions about the two-week experiment with advancing on a passed ball, but no action was taken to make that a permanent rule. Instead it was tabled and teams were encouraged to continue to examine whether they want to introduce

*continued on page 2*

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## League Meeting, continued from page 1

the rule for the 2005 season. There are some aspects of allowing an advance on a passed ball that need clarification. For example, in the situation of runners on first and third base, if there is a passed ball and the runner from first base advances and rounds second base, then if the catcher throws to second base could that runner be out on a force play or is a tag required? Also, if the catcher makes that throw but the ball goes into center field, can both runners try to advance? Since the experimental period is now finished, games for the remainder of the 2004 season will not have an advance on a passed ball, although two teams that want to continue to experiment with the rule may do so, if both teams agree to it prior to a game.

## Player Survey Results Analyzed

The May newsletter contained a survey to which players could respond, and the results were analyzed to see if there was a demand for any changes, such as the minimum pitching age or base running rules (*Editor's note: the survey results are printed on page 6*). Only 29 of the 294 players responded to the survey, which suggested that the majority of players were satisfied with the rules as they were, and that there was no clear demand for specific changes.

## Protest Procedure Adopted

A procedure for protesting games was adopted, effective immediately. Any protest must be announced to the umpire and the other manager before the next pitch is thrown. After the game, the league President must be informed, and the President will rule on the protest. A procedure for handling appeals was also adopted.

## Golf Tournament Is Getting Close

League secretary Rocky Harlow of the Williston Armadillos team reported on progress of the arrangements for the league's first golf tournament. It will be held Saturday, September 11, 2004, starting at 8:30 am, at the Basin Harbor Club in Vergennes. A portion of the entry fee will benefit the league's treasury. There is still room for more players; see the highlight box on page 5 for contact information.

## Player Tryout Increased to 3 Games

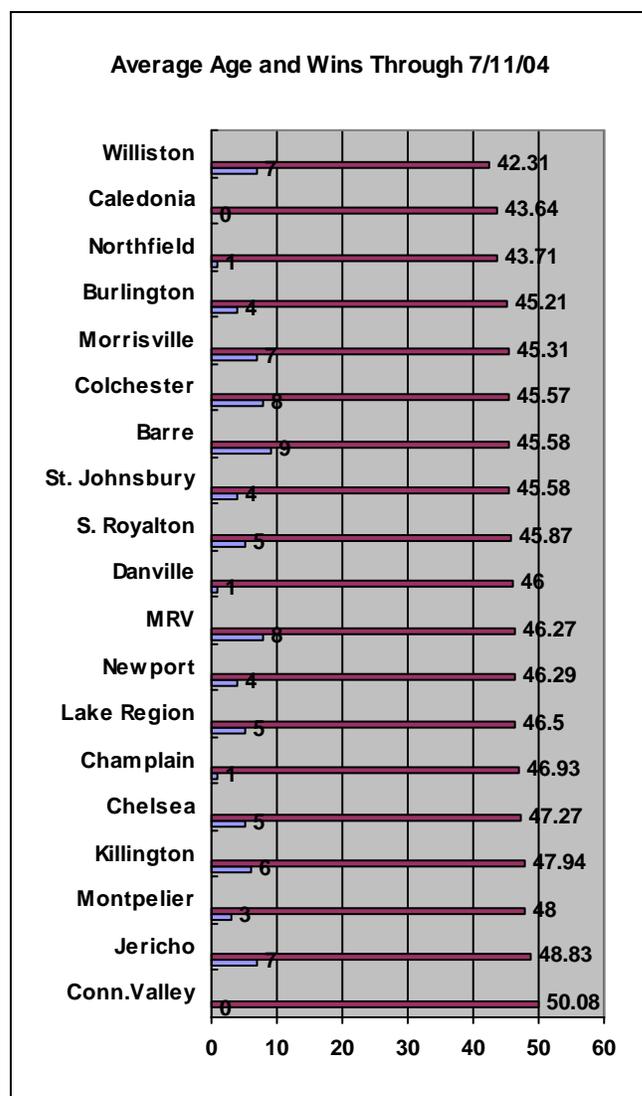
The league voted to increase from 1 to 3 the number of games that can be played by someone who is considered a tryout or fill-in. This is a

league-wide total, which means that if a fill-in plays in one game for each of three teams, they must pay the league dues if they continue beyond that point with any team.

## Are Younger Teams Taking Over?

A chart showing the age distribution of players was presented. It is shown below. The chart shows the teams ranked in order by average age of players, from youngest (top) to oldest (bottom). It also shows the number of games won this season, through July 11. The chart shows no obvious correlation between having a lower average age and winning more games.

In addition, a table comparing the average age for the last 3 seasons was presented, which showed that in 2002 there were 239 players, with an average age of 45.31 years; in 2003 there were 249 players, with an average age of 45.58 years; and this year there are 287 players, with an average age of 46.18. Therefore the average age has increased in each of the last two seasons.



## Floyd Brown, A True Vermont Old-timer

Because in 1984 Floyd Brown and several friends wanted to bring back the days of town team baseball, they created the Northern Vermont Old-Timers Baseball Association, currently known as the Vermont Senior Baseball League.

Floyd served as President through 2003, and is now the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the league, which is organized as a nonprofit corporation.

Starting in 1948 Floyd played ball for West Charleston, then Albany, and finally for Barton in the Sunset League until it folded around 1956. He has coached Little League and Babe Ruth League teams and from 1953 through 2001 umpired in various leagues.



Above, Floyd enjoys a dugout conversation with Newport teammates Brad Gilman (9) and Todd Morey

Floyd worked as a machinist for Butterfield's in Derby Line for 38 years and is also a former deputy sheriff. Although he is officially retired, he is still a town selectman and second constable, and can be seen occasionally serving as a construction flagman or security guard.

He and his wife Doris have been married for 56 years and live in West Charleston. Their 6 children have given them 11 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

Well known as a guitarist, Floyd appears regularly at church, in schools and at the Orleans County Fair.

The Old-Timers league joined the national Mens Senior Baseball League (MSBL) in 1991. Floyd was featured in the MSBL "Hardball" magazine in the Fall 2000 issue.

At the outset of the Old-Timers League, Floyd was the first manager of the Newport team and is still on the roster. He gets into an occasional game, as shown below.



Above, Floyd at bat on June 20 against Northfield's Erik Nielsen. He grounded out to shortstop Rich Smith. The Northfield catcher is Jack Campbell; Martin Rivard is the umpire.

## Last Chance to Sign Up for the Vermont 38+ and 48+ Teams in the MSBL World Series

### Application Form For MSBL World Series, Phoenix, Arizona, Oct. 30 – Nov. 6, 2004

Which division: age 38+ \_\_\_\_\_ age 48+ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth (month–day–year): \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City-State-Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Played on the team in 2002 or 2003? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ If no, desired uniform shirt size (M-L-XL-2XL) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ and desired number \_\_\_\_\_

Regular team name \_\_\_\_\_ Positions played \_\_\_\_\_

Entry fee \$200 due by July 31. Add \$75 for uniform (2 jerseys and hat). Make check payable to Mike Wagner.

Mail this form to:

Mike Wagner

PO Box 10

Newport, VT 05855

or copy the above information into an email and send to: [mike@wagner-usa.net](mailto:mike@wagner-usa.net)

## Interview: Steve Ferreira



*Steve Ferreira has been the highly successful varsity baseball coach at Essex High School for 37 years. He was also the founder and first manager of the Jericho Indians team in 1989, and at age 59 is still a formidable player in our league. We caught up with him at a recent game at which he had 3 hits to lead Jericho to a 19-7 win.*

**VSBN: What was your baseball or softball experience before playing in our league?**

**Steve:** I played for U-Mass Dartmouth for 4 years, and Legion ball in Westport, MA for 3 years, and 3 years in a Massachusetts semi-pro league (70-90 games per season). But after that I played softball until I found about the Old-Timers League.

**VSBN: When and how were the Jericho Indians formed?**

**Steve:** When I was 44 years old, 15 years ago in 1989, I wanted to switch from softball to baseball. I called the manager of the Underhill team to see if he had any openings, but he did not. His advice was to try and start another team, so I did. I called former Essex baseball players and some guys who played softball with me over the previous 20 years. The name "Indians" came from the movie "Major League" which came out around that time. We looked like a collection of characters, but we could play baseball well. Our first year we were 9-1 and won the league championship. I'm the only player left from the original team. Clint Erb started playing in 1991 followed by Lefty Guillette and Jim Goodrum in 1994. Most of the rest came in during the mid to late 1990s.



Above, after chatting amiably, Steve and Newport First Baseman Gary White go their separate ways once the next batter hits the ball.

**VSBN: What were the issues that led to the breakup of the league in 1995?**

**Steve:** The teams that left wanted to play a more serious, wins are all-important, brand of ball. The teams that stayed, Jericho, Winooski, Champlain and Newport, wanted the league to remain less intense, a more friendly atmosphere. The breakaway teams Milton, Underhill, Enosburg and Missisquoi wanted to play closer to regular rules. Obviously our philosophy was more popular as seen in our league's present number of teams.

**VSBN: What do you see as the future of our league?**

**Steve:** I see the league breaking up again for a lot of the same reasons. Some of our teams are going young to enhance the chances of winning. While others stay pat and want to enjoy the game and the company of their fellow teammates. This division is not a bad thing, it just breaks into two camps: load up and win versus stay the same, get older together and play baseball. Both want to win every Sunday, it's just that one group won't put teammates ahead of wins.

**VSBN: Why do you think you have been so successful with the baseball program at Essex High School?**

**Steve:** There are 3 major reasons for the success of the Essex Varsity Baseball program:

1 – Beginning in 1970 we started a freshman team, so for 34 years we have had a Freshman team with 17-20 players. Our Junior Varsity team has 16 to 18 Sophomores, and therefore our Varsity team is mainly Juniors and Seniors (17 to 19 players). You win with older guys much easier, especially when other schools don't have a three level program and are forced to use younger players on their Varsity.

2 – I try to get as many former Essex baseball players as assistant coaches as possible. Loyalty and tradition are key elements. Also, I try to get coaches who have been successful at coaching. This would include knowing baseball skills, coaching skills and teaching skills. Those people who have those skills and are competitive will serve the players well at their level.

3 – The Essex community does a great job with all the Little Leagues / Babe Ruth leagues (junior and senior) and Legion ball. The more young players that play and have quality coaches, the better the chances are for achieving success at the High School Varsity level.

*continued on page 5*



Above, Jericho teammate Lefty Guillette, who is one of Steve's assistant coaches at Essex HS, poses with Steve before a High School playoff game in June 2004.

**VSBN: What is your job at the school in addition to coaching baseball?**

**Steve:** I am the Chairman of the Business Department and I teach Economics, Finance, and a Marketing and Management course.

**VSBN: Tell us a little about your family.**

**Steve:** I have been married to my wife, Corinne, for 36 years. For the past 8 years she has been a nurse for an Essex Junction elementary school. Prior to that, Corinne was a surgical nurse at the Fletcher Allen Hospital for 22 years. We have two sons. Steve is 34, married with two children, a daughter Kaylan who is 3 and a son, Aidan who is 8 months. Jason is 31 and is a lawyer for the firm of McCormick, Fitzpatrick, Kasper & Burchard in Burlington. One of the partners of the firm is Tom Simon, who plays for the Burlington Cardinals.



He pitches, too. On June 27 Steve pitched the 9<sup>th</sup> inning and retired the side 1-2-3 to nail down a win. Can you get a save with a 12-run lead?

## There Are Still Some Spaces Open In The Golf Tournament



**What?** 18 hole golf tournament, format: 4 player captain and crew scramble; lots of prizes

**Who can play?** Any player in our league and their guests

**Where?** Basin Harbor Club, Vergennes

**When?** Saturday, September 11, 2004; 8:30 AM start

**Cost?** \$75 includes golf, cart, prizes, lunch

**Why?** A portion of the entry fee will be used to benefit the league's treasury

**Who's in charge?** League Secretary Rocky Harlow of the Williston Armadillos

**What should I do?** Notify Rocky that you want to participate, and he will give you the details: phone 802-482-5220 email: [hrockster@adelphia.net](mailto:hrockster@adelphia.net)

**Volunteers are needed to help run this event and get a free lunch (really!)**

## Playoff and Championship Format

***This information is based on league rule 17, which explains the format of the playoffs and championship.***

A player must play in at least 4 regular season games with one team in order to be eligible to play for that team in the playoffs and championship.

Teams will be seeded based on final standings from the regular season, using this order to break ties:

- 1- Complete won/lost percentage (*note that tie games are NOT half win, half loss, they are not counted at all*)
- 2- Head – to – head won/lost percentage
- 3- Fewest runs allowed **per game** in regular season
- 4- Coin toss or random drawing

In any playoff and championship, the home team is the higher seeded team (#1 is higher than #2, etc.). **Teams keep the same original seed position throughout the playoffs and championship;** a lower seeded team which wins against a higher seeded team does not gain the home field advantages of the higher seed position.

The first 8 teams in the regular season standings will be called the upper division and their playoffs will lead to the league championship. The remaining teams will be called the lower division and their playoffs will lead to the lower division championship.

### Sept. 5, Upper Division quarterfinal round

- Game 1: team #8 at team #1
- Game 2: team #7 at team #2
- Game 3: team #6 at team #3
- Game 4: team #5 at team #4

### Sept.5, Lower Division play-in (teams 9-10-11-12-13 bye)

- Game 5: team #19 at team #14
- Game 6: team #18 at team #15
- Game 7: team #17 at team #16

### Sept. 12, Upper Division semifinal round

- Game 8: Game 1 winner vs. Game 4 winner
- Game 9: Game 2 winner vs. Game 3 winner

### Sept. 12, Lower Division quarterfinal round

- Game 10: Game 7 winner at. team #9
- Game 11: Game 6 winner at team #10
- Game 12: Game 5 winner at team #11
- Game 13: team #13 at team #12

### Sept. 19, League Championship

- Game 14: Game 8 winner vs. Game 9 winner

### Sept. 19, Lower Division semifinal round

- Game 15: Game 10 winner vs. Game 13 winner
- Game 16: Game 11 winner vs. Game 12 winner

### Sept. 26, State Championship

Game 17: League Champion (Game 14 winner) vs. GMMSBL Champion

### Sept. 26, Lower Division Championship

- Game 18: Game 15 winner vs. Game 16 winner

## Player Survey Results

The last newsletter contained a Player Survey For Rules Changes. The responses to that survey were reported to the league at the July 18 meeting, and are reprinted here for all players to consider.

Number of players in the league: 294  
Number of survey responses: 29  
Percent of players who responded: 9.9%

(number in favor shown in parentheses)

Runner can take a normal lead but not steal bases (10)

Runner can take a normal lead without a limit and try to steal bases (1)

Runner can take a normal lead with a limit and try to steal bases (6)

On a pickoff attempt by catcher or pitcher, runner can try to advance to next base (11)

Runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> can advance on passed ball that goes beyond marked circle (4)

All runners can advance on any passed ball or wild pitch, including scoring from 3<sup>rd</sup> base (8)

Minimum pitching age should be changed to:

40 (5)

42 (1)

43 (1)

48 (1)

In the schedule we should play as many teams as possible during the season instead of 2 games against some and none against others (4)

Should the league split into 2 parts, one with existing rules and one with rules that open up the game more?

Yes (3) No (21)

If there was such a split, in which one would you play?

Existing rules (10) Changed rules (6)

### Vermont Senior Baseball News

is published by:

**Vermont Senior Baseball League, Inc.**

**Chairman of the Board of Directors:** Floyd Brown

**President:** Mike Wagner **Vice-President:** Wayne Davis

**Secretary:** Rocky Harlow **Treasurer:** Brian Stevens

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Website: [www.msblnational.com](http://www.msblnational.com)

**Next issue: September 2004**

## Bottom of the Lineup

By Mike Wagner, Editor

At the July 18 league meeting the league's founder and long time President Floyd Brown was given a plaque honoring his 20 years of dedication to the league (see pages 1 and 3 for more about Floyd). He must have been doing something right to get us to this point, and it is important that we understand and continue the values for which Floyd stands and which are part of his vision for this baseball league.

These values are included in the league's motto, which appears on the league's web site and in the masthead of this newsletter: "A hardball league for age 35 and over that plays a safe, fun, and competitive game of baseball in an atmosphere of good sportsmanship".

To bring home the applicability of these values to each individual player, all players sign a code of conduct. Although the code is expressed in negative terms by listing actions that are not permitted, it reinforces the positive values that are expected.

The core of the code of conduct is this list of 5 actions that are prohibited:

- 1- Pushing an umpire or intentionally blocking an umpire's movement.
- 2- Sustained arguing of an umpire's decision.
- 3- Using abusive, profane, or obscene language or gestures.
- 4- Throwing a bat, glove, helmet or other equipment in anger.
- 5- Creating a disruptive, threatening or dangerous situation.

While it is part of the game to be competitive and try to win, it is important that we remember who we are and why we are doing what we are doing. We are people age 35 and older who are playing a game that we love for its interaction of skill, strategy, teamwork, tradition and fun. We do this in front of family and friends, and the occasional stranger who is attracted by the sights and sounds of a baseball game. In consideration of the spectators, our teammates and opponents, and for our own enjoyment on a day off from work, we need to maintain the "atmosphere of good sportsmanship" at all times.

In a baseball game, there are two teams competing but there is only one ball in play, so stuff happens that can create momentary stress. A batter is hit by a pitch. The ball takes a funny bounce and eludes a fielder. An outfielder doesn't hit the cutoff. The catcher doesn't see a foul pop that lands nearby. The third base coach sends a runner home who is tagged out easily. Players collide. An umpire makes a call that someone doesn't like. Your team loses. The other team wins.

In all these situations it is important to keep cool. Although we are playing baseball and major leaguers play baseball, we should not copy everything that major leaguers do. Earlier this year a batter was hit by a pitch and as he left the box he pointed at the pitcher, just like they do on television. He was surprised when the umpire immediately ejected him from the game. It was a threatening gesture, and had no place in a game in our league.

If we are going to have a league to hand off to our children when they turn 35 then the way we play the game has to be based on shared ideas of lasting values. If we stay true to Floyd Brown's vision then it can happen.