

Little League Canada Communiqué

Dissolution of the Big League Programs

As most of you are aware, Little League International has taken the step of ending the baseball and softball programs for ages 16 to 18 years of age within the overall Little League Program. This has been a topic of discussion between staff in Williamsport for some time, however the speed at which it occurred and lack of forewarning was troubling to many of us involved in the program.

As a result of this decision, the Executive Committee hosted a conference call for all District Administrators in Canada on September 5th to discuss the ramifications of this decision and what alternatives we may have as many of us wish to continue to provide our quality baseball and softball programs for these age groups. The DA's asked the Executive Committee to explore possibilities in a timely fashion as several registration dates are approaching for certain areas in Canada.

The Executive Committee began preliminary fact seeking immediately and then met on September 17th to develop a solution.

Although there are many unknowns at this time, we believe we have enough of a viable outline for a program for this age group for the leagues and districts to proceed with registration while we fill out the details as soon as possible.

What we envision is a program for players aged 17 to 19 years of age in either baseball or softball. The rationale for the change in ages from Big League is twofold: firstly, we have had 19-year old players in some programs in the past using a waiver and, secondly, removing the 16-year old players from the division of play eliminates any impact on the Little League Senior program and thus no chance of support from Williamsport.

We believe we have a viable governance model outside of your present Little League Boards which places this new program in a position of independence from your governance and thus will not be an issue with Little League International.

More details will follow regarding the age grouping, the operational and administrative process, and year end championship opportunities as they develop and we can confirm them.

In the meantime, please prepare for your registration processes to have some form of program for the 2017 season. Hopefully we can give you much more concrete information prior to any registration dates. If you have a date approaching that cannot be postponed, please let me know. We will try and work out a solution such as an informal registration where participants would clearly understand the uncertainties we face at the moment.

Feel free to share this communicate with all your Board members and prospective players. The Executive is cautiously optimistic about this evolving opportunity and I look forward to bringing you more details in the coming days. With your input as we move along, and having the Executive members dedicated to a solution, I am hopeful we can have a solid foundation built for discussion at our Board of Directors meeting in November.

Roy Bergerman, President
Little League Canada