

# 2020-2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

The report will cover the period November 1, 2020 to October 31, 2021 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.

### COVID-19 RESPONSE

It goes without saying that the COVID-19 pandemic was something that was not only unexpected, but also unprecedented. While 2020 was very challenging, 2021 was challenging in its own way. We had to stop programming in February 2021 for a period of approximately 5 weeks. It required an extreme amount of work to communicate, reschedule and credit as needed. However, as an organization I'm proud of how flexible and resilient we were under the circumstances. As time progressed and things became more clear - we attempted to run as normal a season as possible given the changing regulations. This was increasingly challenging this season as the daily regulations started to drain some of the membership. However, these regulations were not being changed by the government. This certainly led to increased stress on the association. While this season was not without challenges, I'm proud how everyone met these challenges head-on and ensured the safest possible return to activity that we could have. I want to thank everyone who had a role in getting us back on the field in a safe and timely manner. Throughout each section, any COVID-19 specific changes will be mentioned.

### ADMINISTRATION

This was the 2nd full season that I took on the role as Executive Director.

Our first 'grant worker' started on June 1st, 2021.

#### *Grant Workers*

SJ MBA had an increase in the number of grant students in 2021:

Canada Summer Jobs	14 (same as 2020)
NL Post-Secondary	0 (1 less than 2020)
NL High School	16 (5 more than 2020)

*Total 30*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In December we held our Annual General Meeting and elected a new Board. Nikki Musseau was voted into the Vice President's position for a 2 year term. We then elected 5 at large officers to 2 year terms (Michelle Healy, Paul Currie, Cole MacIssac, Roger Andrews & Mark Healy).

## PROGRAMS

2020-2021 was another busy year. Our registration numbers increased significantly over 2020 (~9% increase from 2020). We had a very busy year given the circumstances.

### *Winter Ball*

In mid-November we opened On-line registration. This was our 8th 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 uncertainty in programming due to COVID-19.

Comparative numbers to 2016-2021 are shown below:

Session 1				Session 2		
	House League	All Star	Female	House League	All Star	Female
2016	119	74	0	121	90	0
2017	124	82	0	123	93	0
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

The program consisted of two 6-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 8-week segments (the 2nd segment was changed to 4 weeks due to shut downs and credit were issued). We charged \$240 per player per 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 also started 2 new training options in 2020: Specialty Camps and Indoor Leagues. Specialty Camps were designed 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. Due to COVID-19 shutdowns, we lost the 2nd Defensive Camp in the spring of 2021. Registration numbers were as follows:

	Offensive (Jan 2021)	Offensive (April 2021)	Pitching (Nov 2020)	Pitching (Feb 2021)	Pitching (Oct 2021)	Defensive (Dec 2020)
Early Session	12	20	24	22	24	10
Late Session	5	12	20	11	10	7

In the Fall of 2020, we also started indoor leagues at the Techniplex to provide some options for players who may not be able to play other sports due to COVID-19 restrictions in gyms. It also gave those players who wanted to play more baseball throughout the year the option to do so. Like the Specialty Camps, there were designed to be short 4 week programs that totaled 120 minutes per session. Due to COVID-19, we were not able to do many indoor league sessions in this fiscal year. If numbers warrant we will look to do this program again in the future.

Due to COVID-19, we were unable to continue our usual school tournaments in 2021. We hope to be able to restart them safely in 2022.

### **Registration**

Our House League registration opened on Thursday, April 15/21 with full on-line registration and payment. We switched our provider this year to a Canadian company as League Lineup is having technical issues. While this was a last second, necessary change, we received great reviews from the membership. We had a fantastic resurgence in numbers post COVID with no paid advertising. It is obvious that we enjoy the best form of advertising – word of mouth. In most divisions, we had teams with 14-15 players.

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Rally Cap (5-7)	133	121	131	147	149
9U (8-9)	213	185	209	236	217
11U (10-11)	195	191	218	209	193
13U (12-13)	171	165	154	178	187
15U (14-15)	118	118	134	134	127
18U (16-18)	49	49	46	32	19
12U Female (10-12)	46	71	68	56	N/A

14U Female (13-14)	26				
17U Female (15-17)	31				
TOTAL	982	900	960	992	892

## ALL STAR PROGRAM

### *Selection – Coaches-Teams*

In March, 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 17 all-star teams in 2021 in the following divisions:

11U A – Provincial Champions	11U AA – Provincial Silver Medalists	11U AAA – Provincial Champions & Qualified for Atlantics	12U AA – Provincial Silver
12U A – Did Not Qualify	13U A – Provincial Champions	13U AA – Provincial Champions and Qualified for Atlantics	13U AAA – Provincial Champions and Qualified for Atlantics
14U AA – Provincial Champions	14U A – Did Not Qualify	15U A - Provincial Champions	15U AA – Provincial Champions and Qualified for Atlantics
15U AAA – Provincial Champions and Qualified for Atlantics	16U AA – Provincial Champions	16U A - Provincial Champions	18U - Did Not Qualify
21U - Provincial Champions			

In June, 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 in advance of the coaches meeting to ensure we felt comfortable with results. We brought back the selection meeting in 2021 which we hosted at Swilers. However, we ran into some issues with this process when all coaches were present at the selection meeting. We will look to make some changes to this process in 2022.

#### *Caps High Performance Program*

In 2020, we started our Caps High Performance Program with Premier Sports Academy. We continued this program in 2021. This consolidated program allowed all of our teams to receive consistent training with high frequency repetition. We received positive feedback about this program and it was well attended. We will continue to tweak this program going forward and look forward to receiving feedback on how we can improve going forward.

#### *Metro League*

In 2021 with the addition of Paradise, MP, CBN and CBS teams, we produced full (14-16 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. We had another successful championship round since the changes in 2019, however the scheduling of Atlantics will continue to be an issue. I would recommend that going forward teams that are traveling to Atlantics cannot participate in the Championships as it handcuffs schedules, especially with weather uncertainty. Our executive will continue to grow and support the regional interleague in 2021, specially looking at separate AAA and AA leagues.

#### *Female Teams*

Our female teams enjoyed tremendous success in 2021 capturing a medal in almost every tournament.

### **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 2020, we tiered the house league tournaments in 11U and 13U so that most teams received medals. We added tiered events in 12U and 15U this season as well. Each house League team were scheduled for a minimum of 20 games.

*Rally Cap Program* – Led by Megan Bennett, our Rally Cap program proved to be very successful. We had 12 teams (including one all female team) play over 4 nights each week. We received numerous compliments from parents and coaches. Although we had to reschedule Night Under the Lights several times, 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 2022. The Blue Jays are increasing their sponsorship of this program and we expect some exciting changes in 2022!

*9U* – We had a big change in 9U this season. We trialed a 9U minor and 9U major program. The rationale was to group like skilled players while appreciating that it's still a house league and will never be an all-star or selection program. This also allowed 7 year olds to move up from Rally Cap and have more game-like scenarios. By all accounts this was a great switch as we had 8 teams in each division. There was meaningful competition in both divisions with some great feedback. I would recommend this program continue in 2022, and possibly looking at expanding to Rally Cap. We played 4 nights a week at Virginia Park and Kelly's Brook under the guidance of Andrea Turner and various grant staff.

*11U* – We continued with 12 teams. We also introduced the 11U ranking night. The goal of this program was to try and help us divide players into teams. Obviously ranking approximately 180 players is a difficult endeavor but we were hoping this would help. Our goal for house league is for players to have fun and play with their friends and this program was not intended to overshadow this. It was not clear if this program made the teams more even, however I would recommend trialing this again in 2022 if there is enough time between school tournaments. A goal I have for 2022 is to increase the quality of coaching in 11U which I believe will increase the calibre of play and make the players have more fun.

*13U* – 13U numbers remained steady in 2021 after the 2019 decrease. This prevented a lot of defaults. We had 10 teams. A goal I have for 2022 is to increase the quality of coaching in 13U which I believe will increase the calibre of play and make the players have more fun.

*15U* – We had 7 teams (one of which was the Girls 16U team) which was an increase from 2020. The league was very competitive but did suffer from some issues with defaults at times. We did recognize that there was an increase in travel this summer which may have affected numbers. We ended the season with a very successful John Wickham Memorial Championship tournament. A goal I have for 2022 is to increase the quality of coaching in 15U which I believe will increase the calibre of play and make the players have more fun.

*18U* – We continued with 3 SJ teams this season. They played in a regional league with 2 Mount Pearl teams and a team from Paradise. We struggled with defaults and poor weather on Sundays this season. I do not believe that this division was as successful as it was in 2020. We need to evaluate why players are registering and ensure that if they register they are intending to play. While there are still kinks to work out, 2021 was a better season than we have had over the past several years in 18U.

*Female Divisions* - Our League of their Own Female Regional program increased to 3 divisions - 12U, 14U and 17U. While the older divisions had only 3 teams, the quality of play was very equal amongst SJ teams. 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.

#### *Hit, Run and Throw Events*

In response to the tournament regulations in 2020, we adopted Hit, Run and Throw Events to add some competition/training hours to our house league player schedules. These were very

well received, especially in the younger divisions. Operationally, it does match more appropriately to our goals of fun and training in house league divisions. We will continue to tweak these events going forward. We anticipate doing them again in 2022.

#### *Drills & Skills Clinics*

We had another great season of our recently revamped drills and skills clinics. While there are some areas of improvement, Maddi Healy, Jacob Gillis and their team did a great job. In 2022, we will look at providing more specialized training under the same model of morning sessions switching every week, including the female camp.

#### *Special Events*

Our special events in 2021 were different but well executed. Events included the following:

Mike Buist Classic	July 9th to 11th	All fields	40 teams
16U AA/A Provincials	August 6th to 8th	Airport Heights	5 teams
15U AA/A Provincials	August 20th to 22nd	APH/WW	8 teams
11U AAA/AA Provincials	Sept 3rd to 5th	LSP/TN/WP/KG	12 teams
13U AAA Atlantics	Sept 10th to 12th	LSP	5 teams
Night Under the Lights	Sept 10th to 12th	St. Pat's	12 teams

## **FINANCE**

As you will note in our financial statements, we had a large surplus in 2021. While this seems extreme, there was a lot of one off COVID-19 funding that we received in 2020 that came in after our fiscal year end. This funding accounted for approximately \$65,000 in revenue that we will not receive again. As well, we had a large increase in registration while having the benefit of using some credits from 2020 on facility rentals, uniforms, baseballs, etc. This money will directly be put towards projects for our membership including a new scoreboard at Little St. Pat's, office renovations, etc.

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

We lost some sponsors in 2020. Given the uncertainty in our economy, sponsorships will continue to be a challenge. However, I will be working diligently to maintain our revenues through this source. Thankfully, we did gain a new sponsor in the Breton Group. Welcome aboard! We are thankful you are our partner.

## **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. I want to express a sincere thank you to Ken Curtis and all the Directors for their support and commitment. SJMBA is fortunate to have such a dedicated group of volunteers.

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 2022!

To our sponsors – Sportscraft and the Breton Group – 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, Mike Beck, Neil McKenzie, Mike Adam, Leon Organ, Paul Stanford and all the guys and gals who work on our fields – a sincere thank you. Great job in 2021!

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 Jack Harris) 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