

Cover Letter

9/17/2022

First off, thank you Randy for your support over these past few years. You allowed us to experiment with a few concepts with the purpose of enhancing American Legion baseball here in Minnesota. We operated, as you know, with relative autonomy but I would think most all would agree that we stayed faithful to our Legion-based mission. This is not our project it is the Minnesota Legion Baseball All Star program – part of the state board just like any state tournament. We are but the developers and producers. We are not the owners.

Our Objective: Development

- So much of the work the Board does is to manage the regular season and then stage playoffs and state tournaments. That is a big undertaking for a relatively small, group of directors with very limited staff access. Steering that effort is no easy task, is it! Legion is essentially a 7-week season. Its intense. One week of sub states eliminates 90% of the players. And then all but 30 are done the state tournament weekend. It's been that way forever.
- Legion has structured itself after high schools using school district boundaries.
- We coach the same way we always did. We tell players to push themselves. We tell them to be their very best. We tell them to compete for their playing positions (assuming there is anyone in the school district to push a top player). We tell them to play against the very best competition in order to get better.

But baseball has changed.

- It no longer is just a summer season. For the players who are dedicated to baseball, the season is all year round.
- Baseball is now a multi-community sport with club teams and community travel programs instituting all-star concepts.
- The good players do not want their baseball careers to end in high school. They want to play at the next level, whatever level the player can achieve.
- We knew clubs had made inroads. But we (I) did not appreciate how substantial that erosion has been. College coach after college coach – Their top players are coming out of the clubs

Our goal was to see if there are ways to update Legion baseball to add opportunities that would enhance the appeal of Legion ball to the better players in the belief that more of those players will stay with or return to community (Legion) baseball.

- We believed that adding an all-star or multi-community component would be popular. We did not realize how strong and universal the interest would be.
- We felt people wanted more opportunity under the Legion umbrella. Again. 100% verified.

The way to test out our theories was to do the difficult piece – to establish a state-wide all-star event.

- We needed to create systems to promote, gather players and information, make selections, and then execute the event.
- We started at the Junior level (year 1). Successful, yes. But not the age level to showcase the best Legion talent.

- 2022 established a senior level all-star tournament. That event nailed it.
- We added workouts with top coaches. We have instituted a PBR/Legion showcase. And we added a College Bound Breakfast to maximize the experience.
- We can and must do better.
- 55 out of 61 All-Star players were NOT on state tournament teams.

We will lay out a road map that frankly should be relatively simple to install, is relatively inexpensive to finance, and will deliver an immediate bang to the Legion label.

We must stop watching and complaining. We MUST act. We can.

Please forgive the sometimes rambling text or repetitive information contained in the two part report.

- 1) A report on the event
- 2) A road map that is coming

Thanks.

Bruce