

**MINUTES OF THE
NATIONAL FASTPITCH COACHES ASSOCIATION
TRAVEL BALL COACHES CAUCUS**

December 12, 2008 Marco Island Marriott Resort, Marco Island, Florida

The meeting was brought to order at 8:00 A.M. by the Travel Ball Representative, Terry Burdette, Maryland Heartbreakers.

1. Welcome -- Mr. Burdette welcomed the group.
2. Discussion topics – Mr. Burdette stated that prior to the convention, all attendees were sent an e-mail asking about specific topics to discuss at the caucus. Additionally, other topics had been mentioned at the convention prior to the caucus. These issues include:

- What age to start travel ball? The group agreed that this is an area specific question. The most important thing is for younger players to have the opportunity for quality coaching. This can be at the recreation level or travel team level. Stacey Stuck, Pennsylvania ASA Junior Olympic Commissioner, commented that there are many areas in her region where no option is available for fastpitch leagues and the only avenue for learning the game is to join a travel team organization.
- Metal Cleats in Travel Ball – In 2008, the National High School Federation approved the use of metal cleats for high school softball. The issue of adopting the same rule for travel ball was discussed. Some coaches thought it made sense from a fiscal standpoint because if players are purchasing metal cleats for high school, they would also have to buy non-metal cleats for summer ball. The issue of safety was addressed as the ability to slide in metal cleats is not a given. Sara Thompson, a former DI College player, mentioned that she suffered multiple knee injuries and because female athletes are more susceptible to ACL injuries, it was best to stay with non-metal cleats in travel ball. The quality of the fields was also mentioned as a deterrent for switching to metal cleats for travel ball. With the various opinions raised, no proposal was brought forward regarding this topic.
- College Players Playing 18U Softball – There was much discussion on this topic. Some college exposure tournaments don't allow college players to participate. With the makeup of some teams, it means they cannot field a team for those tournaments without picking up other players. Ron Radigonda, the Executive Director of the Amateur Softball Association and Stacey Stuck addressed this issue from ASA's perspective. It was voted on at the recent ASA Council meeting and it was not passed but the vote was 51-49. It requires 60 percent to pass. Several of the ASA Gold coaches at the caucus mentioned that many ASA Gold teams have many college players.

- The recruiting calendar remains a topic of interest among travel ball coaches. No proposals were made but several opinions of the process were given.
- Early commitments were also discussed but we agreed that was a subject that we had no control over but the group would like college coaches to take action on this subject.
- Timing of the Caucus – It was the opinion of all attendees that the Travel Ball group needs to meet before the Softball Summit in order to be able to communicate hot topics to the rest of the NFCA members. Beginning with the 2009 convention, we will either meet earlier during the convention or set up a teleconference and invite all travel ball coaches that are registered for the convention.
- Mr. Burdette also stated that efforts would be made beginning at the 2009 convention to ensure that the travel ball and high school caucus meetings are not held at the same time. There is a lot of overlap between coaches that coach in both arenas and they have to choose one group over the other when attending the caucus.
- Mr. Radigonda also fielded questions from the group regarding ASA Gold issues including:
 - Seeding at the Gold Nationals
 - The method in which Gold teams will be classified in 2009

3. Mr. Burdette also asked for input with regard to the NFCA Coaches College. Several attendees have taken multiple classes. Of the attendees that have not attended a class, the time commitment was given as a primary reason. Mr. Burdette told the group that the NFCA was looking at other options for class structure in an effort to address these concerns.

4. Adjournment. The meeting ended at 10:27 A.M.