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## 2015 SEASON RECAP

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### In Town Home Run Derby

At our All Star / Family Fun Night, we held another Home Run Derby contest - featuring from left to right as the Final Four Danny Belford, Thomas Babalis (champion) Michael Miceli and Jack Anglim.



### In Town Recreational Season - Softball

This past spring featured a great season of Branchburg Softball, headed by Kevin Fitzgibbon. For the first time, four towns- Branchburg, Bridgewater, Readington and Hillsborough- played recreation softball together. There were 150 young women from Branchburg and 275 total playing softball in four divisions.

The league had a strong focus on teaching players the fundamentals of hitting, fielding, throwing and pitching. The pre-season in the winter and spring offered fifteen skills clinics.

The 3-5 division and 6-8 division All-Star games and divisional championships were both very exciting and a lot of fun for all the players who participated. The softball division winners were Fitzgibbon's team in 3-5 and Ryan Van Syckel's team in 6-8.

Branchburg Softball wants to thank families and team sponsors for their support and players for their participation.

### **In Town Recreational Season - Baseball**

We began the season with training for Rookie, Single A, Double A, Triple A and American divisions to help teach the fundamentals of baseball and promote a healthy team spirit.

The season culminated with finalists and champions winning coveted awards and medals as noted below:

#### Triple A

- division champion - Charlotte Knights team, managed by Darren Cray
- division finalist - Savannah Sand Gnats team, managed by Angel Torres

#### American

- division champion - NY Yankees team, managed by Paul Noone
- division finalist - Houston Astros team, managed by Brian Lauducci

#### National

- division champion - Milwaukee Brewers team, managed by Dan Gromko
- division finalist - Pittsburgh Pirates team, managed by Doug Brong

#### Pony

- division champion - Maryland team, managed by Lew DeAngelis
- division finalist - LSU team, managed by John Nemeth

## *ALL STAR FAMILY FUN NIGHT*



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## TRAVEL BASEBALL SEASON RECAP

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### 8U Gold

Managed by Matt Ponpipom, the 8U Gold team finished with an overall record of 11-15-1 and a Green League record of 6-4-1. The team won a district game versus North Hunterdon and made it to the championship game in the Branchburg Machine Pitch tournament. With a roster of sixteen, there was tremendous improvement in all players.

### 9U Blue

The 9U Blue team was managed by Pete Christopulos and coached by Joe Daleo, John DeAmorin, Rob McNamara and Todd Zaninelli. The team ended the season with an overall record of 5-15-1, with five of those losses by two runs or less. In the NPGL League, the team's record was 4-8, including a first round playoff loss. 9U Blue participated in all three BBC tournaments.

Manager Christopulos reports that the team met all three goals set in the pre-season: having fun and acting as a team; being competitive; and improving as baseball players.

### 9U Gold

The 9U Gold team began the season with winter training at Zoned in February and March and then played in the USABL Spring League. The boys were competitive in the spring league and used it as a way to get ready for the summer travel season. The spring season finished with 9U Gold playing in the Bridgewater Memorial Day Tournament.

During the summer season, 9U Gold participated in both Branchburg tournaments, the Montgomery tournament, in which the team advanced to the semi-finals, and the South Brunswick Tournament. The team did very well in districts and finished tied for third in the district pool play, though they did not advance due to a tie breaker. The team went 2-0 in the USABL Summer Slam Tournament in late July. Manager Jason Keller reports that the team will continue to play in the fall and enter a few tournaments.

### 10U Blue

Managed by Lew DeAngelis and coached by Dave Carman, Buddy Kramer, John Nawrath, Brian Reilly and Eric Rogus. The team amassed an overall record of 9-17 and a NPGL League record of 6-7 with a first round playoff loss. 10U Blue participated in the Bridgewater Memorial Day Tournament, the BBC June Tournament and BBC July Tournament. In the July tournament, the team won an exciting opening game 9-7 over Millburn.

Players are looking forward to playing on the 50/70 diamond next spring, with leading, pickoffs, live baserunners at all times, some breaking pitches and longer throws from the left-side infield positions.

### **11U Gold**

Managed by Rich Muratore and coached by Doug Brong, Mike Kalinak, Mark Lauber and Ryan Mote the 11U Gold team participated in a number of summer tournaments, including winning the home town Branchburg Tourney. Making it to the semi finals for districts against a very competitive team, the Bulldogs did not advance for the win. The team continues to train in the fall to ready themselves for 2016!

### **11U Blue**

The 11U Blue team was managed by Adam Murrison and coached by Dave Lanka, Gary Stone, Mike Hoarle, John Pinckert and Alex Sodbinow.

11U Blue achieved an overall record of 28-7-1. They were regular season champions in the Scotch Plains Spring League and won the championship game 10-1. The team won the Bridgewater Memorial Day Tournament, which included a 13-5 victory in the championship game. They made it to the finals in the Branchburg June Tournament. They were division champions in the New Providence Green League.

On May 30, the team played alongside Challenger players in a Challenger League game. The team expresses special thanks to Dave and Jamie Lanka and all of the volunteers for all that they do for the Challenger League.

The team played one of its best overall games of the year, winning 17-3 and becoming champions of the Branchburg July Tournament.

### **12U Blue**

The 12U Blue team finished the NPGL regular season tied for second place with an 8-5 record. Ranked fifth in their playoff bracket, the Bulldogs won two road games, beating Queen City 17-7 and upsetting the number-one-ranked Bridgewater Nationals 8-7 to make it to the championship game.

### **12U Gold**

12U Gold finished first in the USABL Spring league, losing in the semi-final playoff game. The Bulldogs played in both Branchburg tournaments. The team traveled to Hershey Park and played in the July 4th tournament. 12U Gold finished first in the New Providence Gold League and lost in the championship playoff game.

### **14U Gold**

The 14U Gold team was led by manager Joe Kovacs and coached by Ben Fiorentino and Lew DeAngelis.

In the spring and summer seasons, the Bulldogs amassed an overall record of 26-13. The team went on two significant winning streaks in June and July, at one point winning eight out of twelve games and then winning ten out of eleven games. The team participated in five tournaments. In the Bridgewater Memorial Day Tournament and BBC June Tournament, the team made it to the finals. 14U Gold

won the New Jersey State Cup Tournament, beating long-time nemesis Monroe 5-4 on a Brett Murphy two-run single in the bottom of the seventh. The Bulldogs overcame an earlier loss to the Old Bridge Titans to become champions of the South Amboy Summer Slam. In the 14U Babe Ruth Northern N.J. State Tournament, the Bulldogs advanced to the championship game. The team entered the USABL 14U Summer League playoffs as a lower seed, after a grueling stretch in the Babe Ruth State Tournament necessitated several forfeits, and cruised to an American League championship with a convincing victory over TNT Baseball in the final, 12-6.

Most families traveled to Cape May to play a final tournament together. After two tough losses on Saturday removed the opportunity to play for one more championship together, manager Kovacs told the team to play the Sunday afternoon game for each other, for Branchburg Bulldogs pride, and with the hustle and determination they have been taught over their time in the BBC. Facing an undefeated Mid-Atlantic Mariners team, the Bulldogs jumped out to a 9-2 lead and never looked back, winning their last game together 9-5 and sending the opponent home before the Sunday evening final.

## **15U**

The BBC supported a 15U team this summer for the first time in recent history. This is a testament to the players' commitment to Branchburg and the simple enjoyment of playing baseball. The 15U team was coached by Alex Antonelli, whose brother played on the team.

The team participated in the Babe Ruth State Tournament but was unable to advance to Regionals after a tough loss on a late-inning comeback by Piscataway and a tie game with Roxbury. The Bulldogs also played in two Branchburg tournaments. The team played in the 15/16U New Providence Green league along with six other teams from neighboring towns. In the final game of the season, the Bulldogs pulled off a 3-2 win on a walk-off double over the Bridgewater 16U team to capture the division title.

## **Travel Recap Edited by Kate Rizzi**

**Contributors: Pete Christopoulos, Matt Ponpipom, Jason Keller, Lew DeAngelis, Adam Murrison, Bob Ebner, Chris Repetto, Randy Stitt, Natalie Wong**

# Welcome to Branchburg Baseball Club

A  
message  
from BBC  
Board  
Directors

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Reflecting on the 2015 season, we are so proud of all of the In Town and Travel players for their many accomplishments and for having fun, playing America's favorite pastime. This year, we really started to see a lot of traction in community involvement from many of you - whether it was lending your services and time towards a committee, helping prepare the fields before and after games, helping to raise funds for needed supplies and improvements and making the season one that our kids will long remember! We thank you for your participation, involvement and support thus far - together, we can achieve great things and hope to see you all at an upcoming Community meeting.

As we enter the holiday season, it seems odd to be thinking of baseball but the planning and preparation for a fun filled season to come doesn't get done on its own! We continue to have openings and need for volunteers to continue to make this club as enjoyable for the kids as possible so please do come on out to our Monthly Community Meetings, join a committee and GET INVOLVED!!

## Upcoming Events

...**On November 14-15** we will hold Travel Tryouts for all players in the 8U through 14U age groups at the Diamond Nation facility in Flemington. Make sure you go to the [BBC website](#) to register your child. A make up session is scheduled for 11/16.

...**On November 18th**, we will have our next monthly community meeting at 8pm in the community center at Whiton Hills Apartment Complex. It's an Open Meeting for all community members to discuss upcoming plans and preparations for the 2016 season. Be a part of the baseball and softball action!



***DID YOU HEAR THE NEWS???***

## Upcoming Field Improvements

If you've been near any baseball game, joined a community meeting or read our last newsletter, you've heard the buzz that the BBC proposed a list of improvements to the town of Branchburg. After several meetings and planning sessions, we are pleased to announce that we have gained approval from the Township Committee to install turf on fields 1 and 2!! Most of the funds raised over the past few years from





the field improvement raffles as well as other fundraisers will be the primary basis of the investment behind the turf field installation. We expect work to begin sometime this fall. Also the Township has agreed to fund the installation of concrete dug out floors to accompany the new turf fields, as well as new chain-link fence on both fields.

We are thrilled and excited to continue the partnership with the Township of Branchburg and the investments made by prior BBC members, including Steve Sokol who remains a critical part of our Club today as a trustee to the board.

## Other News...

- Thanks to Sandra Miceli for coordinating the lottery ticket fundraiser. Proceeds of the lottery ticket fundraiser went towards the purchase of 2 tents used throughout the Summer Tournament season!! Our thanks to all who participated in the lottery fundraiser and your contributions towards the tents as well!!

## FAQs...

- The BBC is a 100% volunteer organization and relies on your support and participation. To learn more about ways you can help and get involved, contact any member of the Board or go to the website at [branchburgbaseball.com](http://branchburgbaseball.com). Help is needed across all areas and special committees have been formed.
- **Have a Question?** Questions, Feedback, Comments and Suggestions are welcome - come to the next membership meeting or send an email by going to the Feedback tab at [branchburgbaseball.com](http://branchburgbaseball.com)