

UCSSL MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 8, 2020

35 were in attendance, with 23 of 24 teams represented (Creative Too was not).

League officers for 2020 are:

Pete Osborn	Commissioner/Treasurer
Rich Grossberg	Director of Operations
Paul Brody	Coordinator of 50s Division
Marty Marks	Coordinator of 60s Division
John Malone	Advisor
Mike Rosenberg	Assistant

Teams/Managers in 2020

Changes from last year:

- Fred Marchev -- Bad Brains (since early last season)
- Joe Massimino -- Renda Roads (formerly Yogi's Boys)
- Don Montefusco -- Kenilworth VFW
- John Campanella -- Awnings Galore

Frank Verducci will be managing our new 50+ team, sponsored by Suspenders. We may also have a new 60+ team.

Financial

2019 Final Report: \$2800 surplus for the year, due to the great number of postponed games we were unable to make up.

Officers are aware of two major increases in our cost of operating the league this coming season:

- The fee for Linden fields has increased significantly – to the same rate as county fields.
- The umpire fee will be increasing by \$5, to \$50 per game.
- Teams in the 50+ Division will be using two separate bases at first base this year.

Increasing player fees and/or sponsor fees in 2020 was discussed by officers at their annual meeting in December. It was decided that, rather than increasing fees, the following actions would be taken in an effort to reduce expenditures instead:

- * Advise managers to purchase only that number of shirts that are needed for players that don't already have two or more of the same team color and sponsor.
- * Please email the commissioner to let him know how many softballs you have left over from last season so we don't purchase more than we need this year.
- * Forfeitures were again down in 2019 despite the unusually poor weather which often came late in the afternoon on game day. We will continue the requirement that each team must put up an amount equal to the current umpire fee of \$50 in addition to their sponsor's fee -- to be used to pay the umpire in the event of an unexpected forfeit after 3 PM on game day.

Player fees will remain at \$80 (\$65 additional for playing in both 50+ and 60+) and sponsor fees will remain at \$525 in 2019.

Registration/waiver forms were emailed in mid December. Please have players return them to the team manager so you can check them for accuracy, legibility, and completeness, as well as updating team roster information where there are changes in address, etc. As usual, they should be submitted at our remaining league meetings. Players should be encouraged to include their email addresses if they are interested in receiving regular league updates and announcements.

Sponsor letter were also emailed to managers recently. Sponsor fees are due by the beginning of the season.

2019 Problems, 2020 Solutions

Last year we instituted several new initiatives that proved beneficial during the 2019 season and will continue during the upcoming season:

1. The forfeit fee to reimburse umpires has reduced the number and cost of forfeits; more importantly, it reduced the number of players driving to fields unnecessarily.
2. Because it is extremely difficult for managers to determine whether participants on opposing teams are on that team's official final roster, final rosters will again be disseminated by email immediately after the May 15 deadline for completing player registrations. No player will appear on a team's official roster unless his completed registration form and full league payment have been received by that date.
3. A deadline for completion of regular season makeups that gives us the likelihood of completing the playoffs prior to Labor Day was set for Thursday, August 8, 2019. Without this initiative, the idea of scheduling makeups would have been far more chaotic; far worse, we may not have been able to complete all of our playoff series before we no longer had lighted fields. We had 21 days where our full slate of games was postponed and 8 others during which at least one game was postponed due to wet conditions. Thank you all for your cooperation in working with us to schedule as many games as possible -- in as balanced a way as we could under the circumstances. Officers are wary of even attempting to schedule 24 games in each division given the likelihood games will need to be cancelled resulting in the near certainty that not all teams in a given division will play games of the same difficulty. With the addition of new teams in both the 50+ and 60+ Divisions, new schedules are required. Very conveniently, those schedules only work well with a regular season that is shorter than in recent UCSSL seasons. An additional benefit is that these schedules keep our expenses at a level that is manageable without increasing player or sponsor fees.
4. A committee proposed a set of ground rules for each of our fields for uniformity.
5. 50's and 60's rules were coordinated as much as possible.
6. Separate bases were used at first base in the 60s. This will extend to the 50s this season.
7. We requested feedback -- both positive and negative -- regarding the umpires assigned to our games. This resulted is a couple of deficient umpires no longer being assigned to our games and requests for a few to be assigned more frequently. The fee this year is increasing to \$50 per game as an incentive to add more umpires to the pool and to retain those that are the very best in ASA District 2. We have informed our assigner that we will be making regular umpire evaluations with the expectation that we will have the very best umpires assigned to our games routinely.

League banquet/awards night recap for 2019

Friday, October 11 -- Attendance was up from 2018 (80 paid + 7 gratis). The 2020 banquet is scheduled for Friday evening, October 9

Players

If you are seeking new players, let the commissioner know so he can direct inquiries to those teams most in need.

Reminder: If you are aware of any players who expect to transfer to your team from another league team this season, they must inform both the commissioner and their 2019 team manager by January 31.

Weekly highlights and standings, league schedules and other UCSSL (as well as other county's) information is available on the NJSSA website: <http://njsseniorsoftball.com/> , which is updated regularly. Visit/contribute to our Facebook page: Union County Senior Softball League.

Rules

It was emphasized that rules (whether they be USA/ASA or UCSSL) are rules, and they should not and cannot be waived by managers and/or umpires. This would include, but not be limited to, wearing uniform shirts, start/forfeit times of games, late arriving player rule, rabbit rule, etc.

Last year we re-emphasized Rule 3.3 which requires that league/team shirts must be worn. This is to show pride in our teams and our league and, importantly, to recognize our sponsors who provide us with a valuable source of funds. To be certain that each team's current sponsor is recognized, teams that have had the same sponsor for the past two years (or more) will be required in 2020 to wear a shirt that acknowledges their current team sponsor as well as being of the same color. When weather conditions dictate, it is acceptable to wear a garment OVER one's uniform shirt.

Fields

We will again schedule as many games as possible on the better fields in Linden, although the cost per game will now be the same as for the county fields. We expect to again have the use of 8th Ward in Linden. We have also built into the budget sufficient funds so that 7:45 games can be played (where there is an additional fee this year for the use of lights), especially on Tuesdays and Thursday when we need 7 fields.

Pete and Marty will meet later this month with the director of Union County Parks & Recreation with the goal of gaining more consistency in the fields we are able to select on what we hope will be a regular basis.

Equipment

Bat testing to be done at fields as was done last year. Bats with 2019 stickers can be used until a cutoff date TBD in late April or very early May, after testing has taken place at the field for every team.

Teams/Divisions in 2020

By league rule, the following would be the alignment of teams in the 50+ Division:

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>
Deegan Roofing	Phenomenal Boyz	Linda's Driftwood
JoeMax Telecom	Riverside Inn	Advanced Financial
Roselle Legion	Contact Lens	A J Jersey
Linwood Inn	Cranford VFW	Bob's Rescue

Garwood Metal
Bad Brains

The new Suspenders team will slot in as our 7th B Division team in 2020.

The 50+ Division regular season will consist of 20 games per team in the 4-7-4 alignment. B teams will play each A and each C team one time, and play the teams in their own division twice. A and C teams will not face each other, and will play each team in their own division 4 times plus one mid-season bumper game.

By league rule, the following would be the alignment of teams in the 60+ Division:

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
Liberty Lighting	Awnings Galore
American Legion	Avengers
Renda Roads	DeBellis Associates
Kenilworth VFW	Creative Too
Cranford VFW 2	**

** Possibly filled by a new, older, Yogi's Boys.

Each team will play 4 games against each team in their own division and one game against each team in the other division, for a 21 game regular season schedule if we have 10 teams.

Season begins on Monday, April 13
Remaining 2020 meetings (Wednesdays):
February 5, March 11, April 1.