

UCSSL MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 2, 2022

The following is a summary of our league meeting on February 2, 2022:

29 were in attendance, with all 22 teams in the 50+ and 60+ Divisions represented.

Managers were reminded to turn in any completed registration forms and sponsorship fees, as well as to submit the \$50 "forfeit fee" by the April league meeting. A tentative roster for each team is due soon so it can be compared to registrations already received, checked for OOC players, etc.

Team representatives confirmed that we will have exactly 12 teams for the 2022 season.

With a decrease in the number of teams in the 50+ Division, team leaders discussed two options: two divisions of 6 teams each or 3 divisions of 4 teams each. Both structures will consist of a 21 game regular season schedule, the same as in the 60+ Division.

After a lengthy discussion as to whether the 6-6 structure would have two divisions for the playoffs or three divisions in a 4-4-4 format, by a 7-5 vote a 4-4-4 format was approved for the 2022 playoffs IF a 6-6 regular season is approved. The teams with the top 4 regular season records in the A division would compete in the top tier, the bottom two A teams and the top two B teams would compete in the middle tier, and the B teams with the third through sixth best records in the regular season would compete in the third tier of the playoffs.

The 6-6 regular season format includes 3 games within the division and one game against teams in the other division.

The 4-4-4 regular season format has each A and each C team playing 5 games against each team in their division, one game against each B team, and 2 bumpers. The B teams play each other 4 times, each of the other teams once, plus one bumper.

The relative merits of a 6-6 vs. a 4-4-4 divisional structure during the regular season was then discussed. Teams were reminded that they would be selecting a format which best meets the needs of the UCSSL 50+ Division not only for this season but also for as far into the future as we have 12 teams.

In a close 6-6 vote by the teams, a tiebreaking vote was cast in favor of two divisions with 6 teams each.

Based on the 2021 season results and league rules, the following are the 50+ Divisions for the 2022 season:

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
Deegan Roofing	Cranford VFW
Douglas VW	Sonia's BCE
All Pipes Plumbing	Suspenders
Phenomenal Boyz	Linda's Driftwood
Rocky's Bar & Grill	Garwood Metal
Tad Pools	AJ Jersey

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

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
Swan Hotel & Suites	Contact Lens & Vision
Linwood II	Awnings Galore
Linwood Tap House #2	Yogi's Boys
Diversified Lighting	NJ Govt. Services
Kenilworth VFW	DeBellis Associates

The format for the schedule is the same as last season with 21 games with one A-B game each.

Teams were reminded to let the commissioner know if they have equipment needs. After a delay of two seasons, we will purchase 2 new bases for each 50s team so that all teams will have separated bases at first base. If any other bases are deteriorating, they can be replaced if the commissioner is informed soon so an order can be placed with the expectation that bases will arrive in time for the beginning of the season. Frank Verducci volunteered to find an organization that will be able to use the double first base bags we will no longer need.

Teams were reminded to be sure that team uniforms are ready for Opening Day, April 18. At this time there are supply chain delays, making this is an urgent issue. League rules do allow for duplicate uniform numbers so if teams are only adding a few new players, veteran team members can share their older shirts with new players if they are the same color and same sponsor. Teams were again reminded that the UCSSL logo must appear on all league shirts. These have traditionally been placed on the left breast. If that is not possible, a sleeve is the best alternative or some other prominent location. It is important that shirts prominently display both the sponsor and the UCSSL league that is being represented.

Teams should let the commissioner know if they need players. In addition to finding teams for those who have been displaced by the three 50s teams that have folded, we have already had several inquiries at both the 50+ and 60+ levels.

Rich Grossberg gave a detailed overview of the very successful 2021 inaugural season of the UCSSL 70+ Division. We had 68 players last year from throughout north and central Jersey, and NYC, on 4 teams. We are hopeful of increasing the number of teams to 6 this year. Teams are redrafted each year with a goal of balancing the strengths of each. Doubleheader games are self-umpired on adjacent fields in Rahway River Park on Thursday mornings. Players who will turn 69 or older in 2022 are eligible for the upcoming season. The fee of \$40 includes a team T-shirt.

Rich Grossberg advised us that we are able to keep each of the better county fields that we used last year, including Warinanco #1 and #2, and Rahway River Baseball and #1.

Ed Kushner gave an update on the field renovations in Linden's Memorial complex. There have been some delays in the process, but it is likely that our 3 Linden fields will need to be closed – hopefully only one at a time – at some point, likely beginning in May. Teams selecting Linden fields for their games will need to understand that they may need to be moved to another field when their chosen field is being upgraded. With a decrease to 12 teams in the 50+ Division, we will only need six fields on Tuesdays and Thursdays which will help to lessen the impact of having the Linden fields unavailable at times.

We expect to have the same availability at Jerseyland this year. We are also hopeful that the demise of the Scotch Plains league may allow for us to get some more Scotch Plains Rec. fields such as Brookside Park this season.

We follow USA/ASA bat certification rules. There have been no changes to the USA list since March 22 of 2017.

70+ players are allowed the option of using "senior bats," as determined by SSUSA. There is an updated senior bat listing as of January 22. Links to both sets of lists will be emailed to managers.

Bat testing will be done in early April at the commissioner's home, at the fields during the first week or two of the season and one more time (likely late June) only.

2021 UCSSL Rules will be emailed to team leaders this week. We have a need to condense rules and make rules more uniform between the 50s and 60s to avoid confusion.

Team leaders should email suggestions for rule changes by February 23 so they can be compiled and a full set of proposals can be emailed to all in advance of the March meeting.

In recent years we have had many game dates when late afternoon storms have made fields unplayable after Linden and the county maintenance crews have declared fields to be playable, with players and umpires traveling unnecessarily to games that were either not possible to begin or were cancelled in the early innings. We would like to have a system in place such that games can be postponed before players travel on days when storms or heat make travel and/or play unsafe.

There was strong sentiment to allow league officers the discretion to cancel games in a timely manner so that unnecessary travel on days when storms are extremely likely can be avoided. Agreement was also reached on postponing games when an anticipated heat index of 105 or above at 6 PM is predicted.

Team leaders indicated that a 7:00 start time for league meetings is preferred over the 7:30 start of past years. The remaining UCSSL 2022 meetings (each is a Wednesday) are currently scheduled as follows -- although there may be some adjustment to the schedule if it improves our chances of securing better fields:

March 2 -- Discussion and possible revision of rules. Please review current league rules and begin preparing wording for proposals for change. Email the commissioner with any proposals for change in advance of the March meeting.

April 6 -- Sponsor fees and \$50 forfeit fees (please date in April or not at all) are due. Field selection. Distribution of bases, balls, scorebooks, and umpire fee checks. Please keep your ASA/USA rule book, they are no longer being distributed to leagues.