

UCSSL MEETING MINUTES January 29, 2025

Commissioner Marty Marks called the meeting to order at 7 pm. All in attendance introduced themselves and a sign in sheet was circulated. The only team not represented was **Phenomenal Boyz**.

A moment of silence was held for the late Frank Green (**Awnings Galore**) and the late Rich Kovach (**Yogi's Boys**) who both played in UCSSL for many years

It was reported that **K Squad** and **AJ Jersey** of the 50s Division would not be returning for play this season

New Team Names/Sponsors? **Suspenders** will now be sponsored by **Dowling's Tavern**. **Angry Joe's/Tad Pools** might have a new sponsor. **NJ Governmental Services** has yet to announce their new sponsor.

Treasurer's Report

\$25,087.19 as of Jan 1, 2024. \$19,248.41 as of Dec 31, 2024. We ran nearly a \$6000 deficit in 2024. This was mainly due to increased field costs and umpiring fees. Also, in 2024 we changed the way we collected fees to \$1500/team which was not enough to match increased costs.

In 2025 our field costs will once again be going up significantly. Linden Fields \$25 → \$35 → 40% which will be approx. a \$2400 increase

Umpire fees are unknown at this point. Union County field costs will remain at \$20 per use.

- Increasing our per team fee from \$1500 to \$1600 will still cause us to run a deficit and continue to eat into surplus (by design).

Awards Banquet 2024

Attendance was slightly improved over 2023 but still many teams had no representation at all.

2025 Registrations are running ahead of last year's pace at this time by nearly 100%. Over 200 have registered in the 50s/60s Divisions thus far.

Forfeits 2024

- Our biggest problem for the 2024 season. We had a total of 25 forfeits which was nearly 10% of our regular season.
- 10 of our 21 teams had at least one forfeit while 8 of those 10 had 2 or more forfeits.
- At least 2 of these forfeits were intentional as a protest to the division makeup and schedule set up by officers. This was a low point in sportsmanship for our league.
- Other forfeit reasons: "part time players", Sponsors paying entire fee without player contributions.
- We still pay our umpires for same-day forfeits regardless of when they are called in.

We have made it far too easy to forfeit.

New Forfeit Policy moving forward: All teams will be required to submit **three** separate undated forfeit checks prior to the beginning of the season, each in the amount of the umpire fee. Any forfeit, whether it is called in or not, will result in the forfeit check being cashed. Once two checks have been cashed, two more will need to be provided prior to that team taking the field again.

There was discussion about raising the lower roster threshold (now 14) to a high number so mid-season (post-May 15) roster additions can be made in order to reduce forfeits. That rule change will be entertained at a subsequent meeting.

Bat Testing

One preseason testing for previously untested bats. Testing at fields. Testing mid-June. Officer Rich Gaul volunteered to hold additional testing sessions should they become necessary.

Uniform Shirts

Still mandatory with UCSSL logo. Color should be consistent for all players on the field. ORDER NOW so there are no issues when Opening Day arrives.

Rules and Enforcement

Once our 2025 rules have been established is it the desire of managers that they be strictly enforced or shall the officers have the discretion to enforce rules and grant waivers from them as they see fit?

This will include (but not be limited to) enforcement of the team switch rule, wearing a uniform, May 15 roster addition deadline rule and the policy that the league will not reschedule games unless there are weather conditions dictating such or in the unfortunate event such as the death of a teammate or family member of a team member. Once again, managers **UNANIMOUSLY** voted for **ALL** rules to be strictly enforced (That vote was taken TWICE for emphasis).

Division Alignment and Schedules

Managers have unanimously granted officers the authority to create divisions and set the schedule based upon our perception of relative teams strengths, relying mostly on previous year's results.

50s

Two teams have left leaving us with ten so there cannot be three separate divisions.

We do have a competitive disparity from top to bottom but not as pronounced as 60s

We will be moving to a 5A/5B format

A: Douglas VW, Deegan Roofing, Phenomenal Boyz, Angry Joe's, Rocky's B & G

B: Terawulf, Thirsty Turtle, Dowling's Tavern, Echo Tap & Grille, Car Revolution

Criteria used to formulate schedule.

One 2024 B team will now move to the A

Three 2024 C teams will now move to the B

A vs B in 2024: Deegan 7-0 average run margin +15.7

Douglas 7-0 average run margin +10

P Boyz 5-1-1 average run margin +3.1

Rocky's 12-1 average run margin +8.7

Angry Joe's 2-5 average run margin +.5

Schedule format: 4X inside division and 1X outside for 21 games

"Special Accommodations" approved by managers:

In the 50s Division, A teams (**Douglas VW, Deegan Roofing, Phenomenal Boyz, Angry Joe's/Tad Pools, Rocky's B & G**) will give last year's C teams (**Dowling's Tavern, Echo Tap Grille, Car Revolution**) EITHER 5 runs OR and extra defensive player.

60s

No doubt a greater competitive disparity in the 60s

- In 2024 the 4 A teams were 28-0 vs B Teams even with the 5-run spot. Average run margin: 12.5 runs after the 5-run spot.
- Swan Hotel was undefeated in regular season and lost one playoff game. We were hopeful they could split into two teams but evidently, they could not find enough players to do so. This would have allowed for three 4-team divisions. **Swan Hotel** Manager Steve Barba offered that the team would prefer to stay together, play with a larger roster and employ the "Manager's Dream" lineup when necessary.
- There was concern that we could lose one of our 2024 A teams **Linwood II** if they remained in an A Division. **Linwood II** Manager Ed Kushner explained that there were several 2024 roster players who would likely not return in 2025. We simply could not have a 3A/7B format because that could have led to losing one or more additional A teams. Therefore, we will not repeat with a 4A/7B format.
- We will have one 11-team division where every team will play each other twice. There will be one bumper so similarly competitive teams will have an additional game. The last place team will not have a bumper. 21 game season total.
- The top 4 finishers will play in an A playoff and the bottom 7 teams will play in a B playoff.
- There will only be 4 additional matchups between last year's A and B teams, and last year's B teams will still have the majority (62%) of their games against last year's B teams.
- The bottom 7 teams will still compete in their own playoff bracket.
- There was concern raised by managers of Kenilworth VFW, NJ Gov. Services, and Yogi's Boys that this would cause an automatic 4 additional losses for last year's B teams. Also, concerns were raised that with only one division, there would no longer be a regular season B Champion. One remedy to the latter was to provide this award to the 5th place finisher and 1st seed in the B Playoffs
- Officers are proposing new "special accommodations" for 2025: Last year's A teams will provide last year's B teams with either 10 runs OR 5 runs and an extra fielder. Had these special accommodations been in effect in 2024 it would have only changed the results of 2 out of the 28 games!
- When Swan Hotel plays any of last year's A teams, they will provide either 5 runs OR and extra fielder.
- Criteria: Average margin of victory A over B was 12.25 runs AFTER the 5-run spot
Swans average margin of victory over other A teams was nearly 9 runs.
- Earnest discussion was held on the new special accommodations. Other proposals were considered and ultimately a majority vote approved a 7-run AND extra defensive player when last year's A Teams play last year's B teams. Last year's A teams unanimously approved the 5-run OR extra defensive player when Swan Hotel plays last year's A teams.
- A vote was taken that approved special accommodations continuing into the playoffs in the 60s Division

Players Looking For Teams

50s

Craig Weinstein: 917-923-6328. craigweinstein44@yahoo.com (**Has since been picked up by Rocky's B & G**)

Jose Valdez: 917-642-8254 josevaldez05@yahoo.com

60s

Mark Mandel (908) 334-4812 markm1257@verizon.net

Philip Russo (908) 217-0993. russophil@verizon.net (**Has since been picked up by AJ Jersey**)

Robert Herber (646) 209-1004 robherber@yahoo.com

No Games Thursday July 3 approved

Winter Meeting Schedule

March 26 Rules or Field selection Submit Proposed Rule changes in writing to Marty Marks
April 9

Season start April 14