

UCSSL MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 8, 2014

The following is a summary of our league meeting of January 8, 2014:

30 were in attendance, with all 20 teams represented.

League officers for 2014 are again:

Pete Osborn	Commissioner/Treasurer
Rich Grossberg	Director of Operations
Norm Stumpf	Coordinator of 60s Division
Paul Brody	Coordinator of 50s Division

An additional officer for 2014 will be John Malone, Advisor.

Beginning play in 1990, this season will be our 25th as UCSSL.

The 2013 Final Financial report was distributed and discussed. We had a \$2173.84 surplus for the year (following a \$3147.76 deficit for the previous year). Assuming an identical number of players and teams this year, if all expenses increase by 6% we would have a "balanced budget" in 2014.

Player fees for 2014 remain at \$75, and \$135 for those who play in both the 50+ and 60+ divisions. Registration/waiver forms were emailed to managers in December. Managers are reminded to check them for accuracy, legibility, and completeness when received from team members. 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.

Please remember that, because it costs us twice as much for duplicate sponsor plaques and team posters, any team that has multiple sponsors will be required to submit an additional \$50 per team above the normal \$500 sponsor fee for each "extra" sponsor they have.

Family Investors will change sponsors and again be called Liberty Lighting Group in 2014, D&K will be sponsored by Pawn Shop, and Renda Roads will soon have a new sponsor as well.

Sponsor letter forms will be emailed to managers in a few days.

Final rosters will be due this year on or before Thursday, May 15, 5 days earlier than in years past.

The banquet/awards night (Friday, October 4) was reviewed. There were 49 paid attendees, 22 fewer than 2012. A conflict with the ASA recognition banquet on the same night was a primary cause for the decline. We continue to seek ways to increase participation at this enjoyable season-culminating event.

By unanimous consent, we will again use SB-12 softballs in 2014.

Teams in need of equipment need to let Gary Wiese know. Completed shirt order forms are due no later than our March league meeting. Managers were advised to limit their hat orders to only those that will actually be used.

We will again advertise to recruit new players in 2014. A "UCSSL Seeks Players" advertisement will again be sent to the Westfield Leader – Scotch Plains Times, Suburban News, Patch.com, fitness centers, diners, etc. Rich Grossberg has again prepared a one page flyer that will be emailed to managers so that it can be posted in suitable public places.

Managers seeking new players should let the commissioner know so he can direct inquiries to those teams most in need.

Linden fields were again used extensively last season, at a cost of \$60 per team. The fee for county fields will increase from \$12 to \$14 per game this year. Field options for 2014 were discussed. Managers are encouraged to let Rich Grossberg know what fields they would like to utilize so that we may seek only those fields we might actually use.

Linden Recreation has ordered mats to be put in batters' boxes. The timing of their installation is not yet known. The need for shielding from sun glare and the timing of games on certain fields with lights was also discussed.

The 2014 UCSSL season will begin Wednesday, April 16. 24 games in the 50s will be scheduled through Tuesday July 15, and 24 games in 60s through Wednesday July 9.

In the 50+ Division, by league rule Linwood Inn moves up to the A, Contact Lens & Vision returns to the B, Cranford VFW moves down to the C, and Linda's #2 moves up to the B.

A Division	B Division	C Division
Renda Roads	Contact Lens	Cranford VFW
Roselle Legion	Top Line Appliance	AJ Jersey
Liberty Lighting	Awnings Galore	Sun Tavern
Linwood Inn	Linda #2	Pawn Shop

A proposed 50+ Division schedule change within these 3 divisions was presented and discussed. A change to two 6 team divisions was also suggested. Discussion was tabled with the provision that the commissioner will detail each of our options to managers via email so that final discussion and a decision may be accomplished at the February meeting.

A proposed 60+ Division schedule change was also presented and discussed. A change to a five team division and a three team division was suggested, as was a 3-2-3 divisional format. The placement of teams if we remain with two 4 team divisions was also discussed. Further discussion was tabled with the provision that the commissioner will detail each of our options to managers via email so that final discussion and a decision may be accomplished at the February meeting.

The need to increase participation in the 50+ and 60+ state tournaments was discussed at the most recent NJSSA meeting in November. They decided to experiment with the following option, as copied directly from the November NJSSA meeting minutes:

The number of teams participating in the 50+ and 60+ State Tournaments has been declining in recent years. It was suggested that in addition to having league teams compete in the tournaments, we would have teams made up of players from teams that did not have enough players to field a complete team. The onus would be on the league officials to put these teams together and determine whether they should play in A, B or C bracket. This becomes a matter of integrity and trust for the league officials putting the teams together. The object is to get more teams in the tournaments and players from the various counties meeting one another. We will try this format for 2014 and if it is successful, we will continue it, if not, it will be discontinued.

Information for the NJSSA newsletter is due by May 1. In each of the past four years UCSSL has highlighted noteworthy non-softball accomplishments of a league player (Bill Reichle 2010, Gordon LeMatty 2011, Bill Dugan 2012, Tom McNulty 2013). Suggestions for this year would be appreciated, so please let us know.

Changing UCSSL to a wood bat league was proposed. Discussion ensued, including a suggestion to limit batters to using non-wood bats purchased and supplied by the league as well as a suggestion that the only bats that could be used in any game would be those presented prior to the game and made available for the use of any player from either team throughout the game. Discussion was tabled with the provision that the commissioner will detail each of our options to managers via email so that final discussion and a decision may be accomplished at the February meeting.

Remaining 2014 meetings (Wednesdays):

February 12 -- Deadline for determining number of teams, schedules.

March 5 -- Discussion and possible revision of rules. Please review current league rules and begin preparing wording for proposals for change. Shirt orders due. Field selection, if possible.

April 2 -- Distribution of balls, rule books, scorebooks, umpire checks.