

# UCSSL MEETING MINUTES FOR APRIL 6, 2022

The following is a summary of our league meeting of April 6, 2022

30 were in attendance, with all 22 teams represented.

Each team received a check for umpire fees to pay for each regular season home game (\$500 or \$550), and a scorebook. Please remember to hold on to your most recent (2020) copy of the USA Softball Rule Book (which is no longer being printed).

Managers were reminded that a registration/waiver form must be signed prior to a player engaging in any team/league activity, and all registration materials must be received before a player participates in league games.

Managers are also reminded that "preliminary" rosters are due no later than Monday April 11, using the NJSSA form in either WORD or Excel format. This is one week prior to our season openers.

These are needed so the commissioner can inform each team as to what registration materials have not been received, and so a thorough check can be made on things such as too many OOC players on rosters, so a list of 70+ players eligible to use senior bats can be compiled,

We have a new rule, 4.3.2, that grandfathers' players who have played in the league for 5 consecutive seasons. Please indicate if you have any such players, after which they will be doublechecked for compliance. That is far easier than checking the past 5 seasons' rosters for every player who does not reside in Union County.

Final rosters are due on or before May 15, following four full weeks of league play. This should be more than enough time to finalize rosters and gather all completed registration materials.

4.4.1. ALL registration materials must be in the hands of the commissioner by the usual **May 15th** deadline. Final rosters will be disseminated to team leaders via email immediately after the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. 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. No changes can be made after that date unless deemed necessary by league officials.

4.4.3. Any player found to have participated in a game without having first submitted his signed registration form with league fee to his manager will be deemed an illegal player and the team will be subjected to forfeit(s) for the game(s) in which that player participated. Registration forms and fees must be in the hands of the Commissioner within 48 hours after the player participated in a game in order for that player to be deemed a legal participant in that game.

4.4.4. No team may legally participate in a game without having properly submitted their preliminary and final rosters to the Commissioner by the proscribed dates. Violation of this rule will result in forfeiture of game(s).

Sponsor checks are due ASAP as are \$50 forfeit deposit checks.

Due to supply issues, we have been unable to purchase bases recently.

One necessary change to our rules: 50+ will continue to use the double first base bags this year, not two separate bases. We are hopeful of being able to purchase additional bases at a reasonable cost in time to use separate bases at first base next year.

Bats: A schedule for bat testing has been created based on the location of fields and ease of moving from one location to the next. Officers will be testing as many teams as possible on each of these nights early in the season. Weather permitting, we expect to accomplish this during the first week of league games. It is critical that we begin early on the first field we visit and proceed without delay to the other fields. We will test half of the teams on each game night, so there will be a few times we visit a field on Monday or Tuesday where we test only one of the teams at that field (in that situation, the other team will be tested on Wednesday or Thursday).

Bats not tested on the designated date for their team can be brought to Tremley after Wednesday or Thursday games have ended, where I will be available for final testing.

The first teams being tested are as follows:

- Monday April 18 – NJ Governmental Services at Rahway River #1
- Tuesday April 19 – Sonia's at Rahway River #1
- Thursday April 21 – Cranford VFW at Rahway River Baseball

Bats with a 2020 UCSSL sticker can be used until the completion of 2022 testing, after which only those bats with a **2022** label may be used in UCSSL games.

Bats that pass the test will receive a BLACK pre-printed (with "UCSSL 2022") "tamper evident" label. Senior bats will also be tested, and will need to meet the same slightly less stringent compression threshold as in 2017 - 2021 to pass. These will receive a round SILVER "UCSSL 70+ 2022" label.

Cover the sticker with clear tape so it lasts the entire season.

Please understand that it is possible that ASA approved bats can develop a very low level of compression due to extensive use; these bats will fail the compression test which is unfortunate, but these bats do present a **safety** concern which is the primary reason for the bat testing program.

Teams are encouraged you to go to the ASA website's "Non-Approved Bat List" and print a copy to put together with their UCSSL Rules and USA/ASA Rule Book. This link will again be emailed to managers.

Pitcher protection (another a **safety** concern) -- pitchers are again strongly encouraged to wear a protective mask in all UCSSL games. To that end, UCSSL agreed beginning two seasons ago to reimburse pitchers (one per team) for the purchase of a mask, up to a maximum of \$45. The mask will remain the property of the league, held by that team.

Please understand that many other leagues require the use of pitchers' protective gear.

For now, we believe we have taken sufficient **safety** measures through bat testing, the use of the ball deemed safest by USA, and the recommendation that pitchers wear a protective mask.

Our umpire assigner has been very responsive to our requests for assigning outstanding umpires more frequently and for not assigning umpires we find to be deficient. Marty will be asking managers to rate their umpires as an additional means of working collectively to have more of the best umpires officiating our games.

As agreed upon at our earlier 2022 league meetings, officers will be monitoring weather for likely storm disruptions and dangerous heat index predictions so that we can be proactive in postponing games when storms are very likely and/or the heat index is at a dangerous level. Discretion will be used regarding cancellation of games due to imminent storms, whereas a prediction of a 103 degree heat index will trigger an automatic call to cancel. We anticipate making these decisions in a timely manner, early enough on game days so that unnecessary travel by players and umpires can be avoided.

Discussion of proposals for rule changes resulted led to the following, mostly all unanimous votes, for changes in our 2022 UCSSL Rules --

**1.2 New Teams** is amended and renamed **Team Placement 1.2.1:**

*"New teams joining the league in both the 50's and 60's Divisions will be evaluated by the officers in consultation with the team manager to determine proper placement in the league."*

**1.2.2** has been added as a clarification of current practice:

*"The team finishing last in the regular season standings will move down to the lower division for the next season. The team finishing first in the regular season standings will move up to the higher division for the next season. If both teams agree to remain in their respective divisions for the subsequent season, this request will be granted."*

1.2.3 has been added:

*“In the event that new teams are added, or existing teams do not return which necessitates a realignment of divisions, officers will place teams in the new format using the order of regular season finish in the previous season **as a guideline.**”*

**3.4.1 Bats** Revised to state that if the illegal bat is discovered **after** the first pitch to the next batter, then nothing happens other than removing the illegal bat from the game, in agreement with the ASA/USA rule.

**4.2 Teams** Raise the minimum roster size to 14 to help alleviate shorthanded forfeits. This also applies to the minimum for “emergency roster changes”. Emergency roster addition(s) after the May deadline are still be governed by the minimum 25% of all regular season games played by the team in order to qualify for playoffs.(**4.5.2**)

**4.5.3** Amended to read “25% of regular season games” (not 6 games)

Separate out “UCSSL does not have a re-entry provision” from **4.7.4** and make it **4.7.5**

**4.8 Injured Player** There is no slot out for any player except in the case of a player who is ejected from the game.

**5.5 Tie Games.** Amended our international tie-breaker rule to the 8<sup>th</sup> inning like everyone else.

**5.11** 50s division A teams may not play on Tremley unless no other suitable field is available.

**7.1** Eliminate all of **7. Batting** to conform with USA/ASA rules.

**7.3 Maximum Runs Per Inning** In a vote of 60s managers, (**7.3.3**) will now apply for 60s games as well as 50s games. This is now a “catch up **or** 6” rule. (The old 7.3.2 is now no longer necessary.)

**7.4 Maximum Home Run Rule.** Will now apply to 60s as well as 50s.

**8.5 Interference** Agreed to remove the current underlined phrase so that the interference rule applies to all throws.

**11.2B** (60+ Special Accommodation rule)

If the A team is behind when playing a B team, the A team can only score up to 6 runs to tie the B team. The A team should be able to go ahead by 6 runs just like the B team. (This is now covered by 7.3 rule change, so the old 11.2A and 11.2B are no longer needed.)

Some reminders and notifications:

1. Items you received recently (or will receive soon) via email:

2022 UCSSL Rules (make special note of our new rules), UCSSL Ground Rules, 2022 Managers/Officers Listing, 2022 Schedules for both 50s and 60s as well as for bat testing, 2022 Field Permits, and links to USA/ASA Approved and Non-approved bat lists.

## 2. Game day reminders:

Home team occupies bench on first base side of field, supplies bases, strike mat, pays umpire \$50 cash; each team supplies a new ball.

Make sure to carry a copy of UCSSL 2022 Rules to every game.

Speed-up rule is in effect the first two weeks on unlighted fields – no infield, only two warm-up pitches after first inning. Lights will be on at the 3 Linden fields during the first two weeks of the season.

Paying umpires if a delayed rainout -- pay them \$10 "show up" fee if umpire must call the game before a pitch has been thrown. They get full \$50 if there is a game time forfeit.

Please have a responsible person report your team's game results in a timely manner to your division coordinator and to the commissioner so we can send publicity early each weekend.

## 3. Items you should bring and be giving to us, if you have not already done so:

Your sponsor's fee, your \$50 forfeit deposit, remaining player registration forms and fees (please be sure that checks are payable to UCSSL, or are endorsed to UCSSL), your preliminary 2022 roster. (Any of these items you did not bring to the meeting will need to be delivered -- email or otherwise -- to the commissioner's home prior to the start of the season.) Players may not participate without a signed waiver form! Rosters should be emailed as an attachment.