



# DUGOUT CHATTER

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!		

DECEMBER 2007

On the Internet: [www.GSSCS.org](http://www.GSSCS.org) ... GSSC Answering Machine: 491-1721

## GSSC BATTING CHAMPS GIVE 'SECRETS' OF SUCCESS

GSSC league batting champions in 2007 share their "secrets" in this second Dugout Chatter installment of a series featuring tips from those who excel at the plate and in the field. The October-November issue focused on the trio of .800 hitters. This article focuses on those who led their leagues and others who almost made it to the exclusive .800 circle.

The League 3 (Tuesday night) batting champion is **Al Raydon** (53), a lefty who finished with a .758 average. The fact that Al is playing ball

of any kind is a medical miracle. He was an outstanding baseball and basketball player before a freak accident in 1994 "tore my foot off." He recalls falling off a "cheap ladder" while doing household chores and twisting and tearing his foot completely off. It was reattached by a doctor but lacks cartilage. He said he was told that he would "walk with a cane the rest of my life." Fortunately, he said his knees have held up and he can still run in spurts, legging out doubles and even triples. He had four homers this year.

Al, who also pitches as the "oldest guy" on an "open" classification team in Folsom, said he isn't all that big on batting practice. He drives liners between the outfielders but will often go the other way, through the hole between short and third, especially when he is behind in the count. He said he just tries to swing level and not "dip" his shoulder. His biggest swing key is to "not take it too seriously. Once you get tense with anything, the tendency is to screw up. Try to be relaxed. Some guys grip the bat too tight. I'm loose. As the ball is coming in, in slow motion, I swing level.

When I'm next up, I survey the field, and if there's a guy on base, (See Page 2)

### 2008 Sign-ups: Spread the Word to Attract More Players

Player Agent Tom Sansone reported to the Board of Directors that 62 percent of 509 renewal applications, sent out Oct. 29, have been returned as of Dec. 4 for the 2008 season. Among the renewals were 35 multi-league players who decided to drop a league for the coming season, including 17 who played in the Select/Competitive League 6 on Tuesday mornings.

Sansone, counting only seven new applications, urges GSSC members to recruit friends and neighbors who are eligible to join (must be at least 50 in 2008). Tom said he and others planned to contact those who haven't yet renewed their memberships.

(See Page 3)

### New Hotline is Launched

The new "voice" of the Golden Seniors Softball Club is Don Shank, who is hosting the club's telephone recorded messages. Don, a retired federal government security officer, umpired for 25 years, including national championship college fast-pitch games. He qualified for the Hall of Fame of the Indicator Fraternity by umpiring at least three national championship tournaments.

Shank, 63, played plenty of softball over the years but he didn't join the Golden Seniors until 2007. He played on the League 6 EmbroidMe championship team.

The club's longtime "voice" of the telephone hotline, Fred Rainey, passed away this year (see Dugout Chatter of October-November). The updated recording equipment now being used -- voice mail that is supposed to take 10 calls at a time -- includes important notices on general meeting times and places, and information on winter practices. Of course, it is the number to call during wet weather to learn whether fields are playable. The number is **491-1721. #**

**NEXT GENERAL MEETING:  
JAN. 3, 7:30 P.M., VFW  
HALL, 2764 Stockton Blvd.**

## GSSA Batting Leaders (Cont'd)

figure out what I need to do to drive him in. I'll point the barrel of the bat where I want the ball to go. It is important to remember your options. I pretty much have a plan to hit it where there is a hole in the defense. Of course, this doesn't always work. But, hey, we're human."

**Bob Cummings**, 61, shortstop for Hooters Silver and Sexy, paced the Tuesday Select/Competitive League with a .784 average. "I goofed and tried to jack some" over the fence, quipped Cummings, explaining how he failed to maintain the .800-pace that he enjoyed for much of the year.

His advice to anyone who wants to hit well: "It starts with batting practice. If you're not taking BP, you are not going to hit (as well as you can or should). In practice, I hit all the holes, starting down the line and working around the field. It starts there. I used this (GSSC) league to work on it.

"There are some really good pitchers (he complimented Noel Maldonado and Everett Richardson in particular) who mix it up, short and deep. I try to hit the biggest holes. As the lead-off hitter most of the season, my job is to get on base and set the table." Discussing situational hitting with two strikes, Cummings said "most of the time" he'll not hit down the line, but if the defense "leaves me a big hole there, I'll take it. I know I can do it because I've worked on it." He said he takes BP about twice a week.

Cummings plays Major-Plus tournament ball with The Farm, recently finishing third in the 60-and-over nationals in Phoenix. Starting when was in his 40s, he said he's played on 15 national championship teams. He was an infielder in the Dodgers organization, peaking in 1971 at the

AAA level. He didn't make it to "the show" as the Dodgers at that time had an infield that played together for a decade or so (Ron Cey, Bill Russell, Davey Lopes and Steve Garvey).

**Bob Paese**, 53-year-old outfielder, was the top batter in League 5 (Thursday night) at .735. "I'm overwhelmed," he said, noting the plethora of "incredible hitters" in this league. (Michael Lofton, Ettore Minor, Monte Miller, Monte Litle and Emilio Lobato, to name some of them.). "There's some luck involved. I may be an all-right hitter (usually in the .600 range), but I'm not in the hitting class with them. I've shortened my stroke a little bit, not hitting as many doubles and triples as the year before. After the Fourth of July, I went on a surge for three weeks, going 4 for 4 and 5 for 5. That bumped me up."

He also credits batting practice, going to the cages a couple times a week, as well as practicing once a week with a travel team, Wilson Trophy. He also plays Tuesday nights in Roseville.

**John Lack**, 67, paced the Tuesday Day League 2 and all leagues with an .818 average. In League 2, he was followed by **Bill Enos**, 68, at .797. **Roland Stairwalt**, 75, hit .783.

Others in the .700-and-above club: **Monte Litle** (.795 in League 4), **Michael Lofton** (.761 in League 4 and .717 in League 5), **Dan Norton** (.758 in League 4) **Bob Flink** (.753 in League 2) and **Hap Duffney** (.754 in League 4). In League 3, **A.J. Petruzzi** hit .736 and **Dave Raydon** .705.

In League 4, where **Bob Del Chiaro** hit .817 and **Monte Miller** finished an even .800, **Dave Gonzalez** hit .736, **Bill Christian** .735, **Allen Riker** .714, **Fred Mathis** .713 and **Dave Avery** .708.

The League 2 (Tuesday day) .700 club includes **Merv Mill**, .750, **Tony**

**DiBernardo** .746, **Jim Hoffman** .732, **Vidal Franco** .727, **Gus Niklas** .721, **Murv Granderson** .714, **John Raniseski** .707 and **Wally Dorei** .702. Franco also hit .714 in League 6.

**So Close to .800. Bill Enos**, who hit .797 in League 2, has been a stand-out Golden Seniors player for 18 years. He ceased playing in night leagues in 1999, noting that it is much easier to catch balls in daylight. This year he played infield on Tuesdays, hitting .672 in the select League 6 in addition to his League 2 play. He also plays for the California Angels, a major-plus 65s tournament team, and in the doubleheader Sierra League on Thursdays.

Enos said he practices batting throughout the year. His foremost batting tip: "Know the pitcher. Does he throw deep or short? If it's short, move up. Try to take the ball to the alleys from right-center to left-center. I bat left-handed. When you try to hit to the alleys, you have to wait longer and the ball comes down to you. Of course, with two strikes, it is 'see the ball, hit the ball.'"

And, he noted, "The older I get, the more batting practice I need." He also doesn't leg out as many homers these days, but is among the league leaders in triples.

Enos was a standout player in high school and junior college in Sacramento. He said he was offered \$10,000 to sign a two-year contract to pitch in the Philadelphia Phillies organization, but his dad nixed it when the Phillies refused to include a no-cut clause. He enrolled at the University of San Francisco where he played for the Dons.

Not included in the 28 above at .700 or better are players who had too few plate appearances: 2.5 for each of his team's games, or 50 for a 20-game season. These "sticks" included **Rich Ganas** (.718) in League 4, **Bill McMahan**, who hit .766 and .731 in Leagues 6 and 3, respectively, **Larry Davis** (.711 in League 2) and **Rich Del Chiaro** (.702 in League 3).#

## 2008 Sign-Ups (Cont'd) & Other Club News

Sansone also said he is looking for members with marketing backgrounds to help come up with ways to entice more new members.

Tom praised Lou Coppola for his outreach on behalf of the club. Lou recently delivered a presentation and handed out fliers at an Elks Club meeting.

Anyone interested in following Lou's lead and spreading the word about the GSSC should contact Sansone at 686-1654. Need new player applications? Call Tom. Better yet, check the club Web site and download a copy ([www.gsscs.org](http://www.gsscs.org)).

### Committee Chairs for 2008

President Dan Norton announced the following committee chairs for 2008:

Picnic — Dante Ciardella and Benny Benson.

Audit — Don Wall, with Foster Maxwell.

Dugout Chatter — Ron Roach, editor.

Information Technology — Ron Roach.

Safety — Jerry Jodice.

Sunshine & Health — Trudy and Bob Smartt.

Golf — Bill Knoblauch.

### League Commissioners for 2008

Club Commissioner Freddie Miller reported to the Board of Directors on Dec. 4 that commissioners have been appointed to lead all six leagues for 2008. They are Jim McNamara, League 1; Cloicew Wade, League 2; Jerry Toenyas, League 3; Dick Mathews, League 4; Don Wall, League 5, and Greg Leurgans, League 6.

Miller also reported that discussions with city recreation officials

have made it clear that the GSSC cannot change insurance carriers and must use ASA-standard bats. He said the ASA and other organizations will be gathering Jan. 15 in Las Vegas with bat and ball standards to be discussed for 2008. Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) information on allowed or banned bats, with photos, is available at [www.asasoftball.com](http://www.asasoftball.com) (click on "certified equipment"). Beware of bats disallowed at the complex BEFORE investing in a new stick for '08. As previously reported, the Miken Freak and Easton Synergy2 will not be allowed for GSSC games as of Jan. 1, the date their "grandfathered" status expires.

Dates for new player workouts, league drafts and umpire clinics are expected to be announced at the Jan. 3 general meeting. #

### **GOLFERS: SAVE MAY 2**

The GSSC golf tournament is scheduled for Friday afternoon, May 2, at Lincoln Hills Golf Club. Save the date and stay tuned for details on this fun-filled fund-raising event. Interested in serving on the golf committee? Contact Bill Knoblauch ([knobby@rocketmail.com](mailto:knobby@rocketmail.com)) or Ron Roach ([coachrwr@comcast.net](mailto:coachrwr@comcast.net)). #

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

These GSSC members are celebrating December birthdays: Kenneth Gull, David Ikemoto, Robert Tyler, Skip Vanderbundt, Guy Anderson, Terry Drennon, Louis Ve'Lez, Tom Galli, Rich Del Chiaro, Bill Hooper, Rosa McKinney, John Shintaku, George Wehmeyer, Cedric Mitchell, Ed Stoessel, Harvey Swenson, John Wade, James Lucas, John Bishop, Robert Flink, Foster Maxwell, Sheldon Morgan, Frank McNamara, Rob Rash, Manuel Mateo, William Walsh, Billy Beck, Mike Bayne, Louie Chavez, Richard Mathews, Bill Greene, Charles Lash, George Gross and Kate Kennedy. #

### **TELEPHONE "HOTLINES"**

Sunshine & Health

**973-8269**

*Phone/Address Changes*

**391-3938**

*New Player Applications*

**686-1654**

*GSSC #3912*

*Blood Bank*

**456-1500**

*Dugout Chatter*

*Ron Roach, editor*

**422-2500**

*Club Answering Machine for Field Conditions and Meeting News:*  
**491-1721**

## SUNSHINE & HEALTH REPORT

**Dave Vargo**, 2007 club commissioner and multi-league, .800-hitting, double-digit HR ironman, is recovering from rotator cuff and bicep surgeries. On Nov. 26, he advised that "my sling is finally off after six weeks and I've been able for a week now to lie on my right side doing leg-stretching exercises and even cut the grass with a push mower today, but the doc says no throwing or batting until February." Lobbying to be slotted as a tenth-round pick as an assistant manager on Tuesday night, Dave says he can lift 10 pounds and run at 5% of normal speed.

According to Trudy Smartt, via George Hodsdon: **Ron Middlekauff** underwent shoulder surgery in November and **Dinny Watson's** daughter is having or just had a heart operation. #

## A HALL OF FAME LEAGUE?

(Editor's Note: This article was submitted by "an older member facing 75+ too soon." What do members think of the concept outlined below? Send comment to Dugout Chatter, 5911 Holstein Way, Sacramento, CA 95822, or e-mail to coachrwr@comcast.net.)

Playing softball, getting a hit, making a good catch, hassling your friends, improves health, prolongs life and is FUN, no matter who wins the game. Our oldest members should be encouraged to play as long as physically possible. Many members stop playing each year when they could play longer under the right conditions. Some no longer enjoy rotating at catcher every game, or trying to get a hit past better players. Those conditions indicate it may be time for a Golden Seniors "Hall of Fame League 1" where good health, longer life and fun are as important as winning. Why not a league where our oldest batters have a better chance of getting a hit, and are needed to play the infield or outfield instead of just rotating at catcher?

In 2008 we are honored to have 34 active players age 80+ and 75 players age 75-79 who played in 2007, for a total of 109 active players age 75+. That is enough for eight teams with almost 14 players per team if all eligible players enrolled for a Monday AM "Hall of Fame League." It only takes 78 out of those 109 active players to form six teams of 13 players each. National tournaments have divisions for age 75+ teams and even age 80+ teams. Is it time for the largest senior softball club in the area to recognize a 75+ division, or shall we wait for Roseville to do it?

Currently, our oldest members must compete in a 70+ league. We will have 184 active players age 70+ in 2008. That is enough for 14 teams in League 1 if all enrolled. There is a safety concern that the better hitters may injure the older players. The best 70+ players are not encouraged to enroll. Some play weekend tournaments and need to rest on Mondays. Others prefer a higher level of competition, and do not enroll. Those conditions indicate a need for a more competitive league for age 68-70+ members.

How could it work? If Hall of Fame L1 advanced to age 75+, they could play the earliest games at Howe Park when it is cooler, with a new League 7 of age 68+ members playing the later games at Howe Park. Some 75+ players might choose to play in both leagues for a "double-header" day. Since Golden Seniors began at Tahoe Park, that centrally located field might also be used again if needed. What kind of league would you like to play in when you are age 75+ or 80+? At the rate our older active members are going, we may need an 80+ league in a few years to recognize how much longer our active, fit and happy softball players are living. #