

# DUGOUT CHATTER

On the Internet: [www.gsscs.org](http://www.gsscs.org) ... GSSC Hotline for Meeting Info: 491-1721

## **RULES COMMITTEE FORGES CONSENSUS**

The special GSSC Rules Committee for Leagues 2 through 6 has forged a consensus for these five leagues to play under the same rules for courtesy runners and substitutions.

Recommendations from the committee, appointed in October by new League President Ray Mendonsa and the Board of Directors, were endorsed by representatives of the five leagues, as well as umpires. A final draft is scheduled for discussion and possible action at the Dec. 4 general meeting.

At the Nov. 6 board meeting, Mendonsa said the goal is to avoid confusion with different rules among the leagues and to provide fairness in the use of substitute players. The changes do not apply to League 1 (Mondays for players 70 and over) and the new competitive select league for those 70 and over (*see Page 4*)

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**GENERAL  
MEETING:  
THURSDAY,  
DEC. 4,  
7:30 p.m.  
VFW HALL  
2764  
Stockton  
Blvd.**

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## **How to Hit .847: Don't Think or Swing Too Hard**

(Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of reports on GSSC league-leading hitters of 2008.)

Bill Christian is a big guy who says he takes what a defense will give him and is content with hitting line drives and hard ground balls for singles, often to the opposite field. As the second batter in a lineup, he believes his responsibility is to move the leadoff hitter to third base.

"My job is not to hit doubles and triples, but just to get the leadoff hitter to third and wait for the big studs to come up and drive us in. I try not to do too much. If I do too much thinking (about avoiding a particularly good-fielding defender, for example), I'll (sometimes) wind up hitting it right at him."

Christian, 51, just finished his second season playing shortstop on Wednesday nights (League 4). As a Golden Senior "rookie," he hit over .700. He said he might have hit higher but he had to stop hitting 270-foot flies that died in outfielders' gloves. (See Page 2)

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Fall-Winter Practices -- Page 3. Sunshine & Health -- Page 3. League Commissioners are Approved -- Page 4. L2's Batting Champion Hit .796**  
**READ THE DUGOUT CHATTER ONLINE ... SEE PHOTOS FROM PICNIC-PLAYOFFS 2008 ... CHECK OUT THE LIST OF TEAM SPONSORS, DOWNLOAD PLAYER APPLICATIONS, AND MORE AT [WWW.GSSCS.ORG](http://WWW.GSSCS.ORG)**

**BATTING .847 (From P. 1)**

This past season, he led the league in singles, batting an astonishing .847. Only one other Golden Senior managed to hit at least .800 in 2008 during regular season games. Monte Miller, also in L4, hit .821. In 2007, Miller hit an even .800 as one of only three Golden Seniors to hit safely at least eight of every 10 official at-bats. Emilio Lobato, also of L4, hit .797, third-highest in 2008 for all five leagues that kept statistics.

Christian, who is about 6-foot-2 and some 230 pounds, said he isn't a speedster on the base paths, but he's not slow, either. He said part of his success is due to the outfielders playing him too deep because of his size. This year, he concentrated on squaring up the bat on the ball, hitting it hard and settling mostly for hard ground balls or line drives through the infield.

He hadn't played softball in five years before joining the GSSC in 2007. When he played a lot of fast pitch and slow pitch softball as a 25-year-old, he considered himself a line-drive hitter. When he played baseball at Consumnes River College, he once hit as many as seven homers in a season.

Unlike many of the top hitters in the GSSC, Christian is not a multi-league or tournament

team player. He plays only Wednesday nights as that is all his work and family life will accommodate. He coaches his kids in youth baseball. He attends his daughter's soccer games. He has plenty of chores around the house. He is a 20-year employee at the state Franchise Tax Board (in procurement, not tax collecting or auditing, he noted).

Christian doesn't lift weights. He doesn't spend long hours in batting cages. His "practice" mostly consists of hitting fungo flies or infield grounders to kids he coaches in youth baseball. He has coached a high school freshman baseball team. Once in awhile, his son will toss him some balls to hit.

The right-handed batter said "hitting has always come naturally to me" so success for him "is all mental." Thus one could conclude that his "secrets" include confidence in his natural ability and not overthinking about where he needs to hit the ball. He strives to stay within himself by not over swinging for the fences. He figured out in 2007 that hitting "lazy fly balls" kept him off the bases and in the realm of mere .700 hitters.

(Note: League 1 did not keep statistics. Dugout Chatter would like to interview the top L1 hitter. Would managers of each L1 team in 2008 submit their choice as the league's best hitter? Managers cannot

nominate a player on their own teams. Call Ron Roach at 422-2500 with your nominee.) #

**MEMBERS SURVEY.**

Updating results from the membership questionnaires reported in the August issue of Dugout Chatter:

Favor giving women a 5- to 10-year age differential? Yes 78, No 33. (Most of the negative votes came from League 1.)

Would play in Competitive/ Select Age 70 League Tuesday at 10:15? Yes 11, Maybe 10.

Favor play at alternative cheaper facility? Roseville 47, Mather & McClellan 43, Elk Grove 31. Would NOT play at Elk Grove 58; at Roseville 40; at Mather & McClellan 18.

Favor keeping ASA restrictive equipment over higher-performance SSUSA standards: 77 yes, 43 no. (Only League 6 players favored SSUSA standards.)

**GENERAL MEETINGS.**

The Board on Nov. 6 approved General Meetings for 2009 on the first Monday of the month for February, March, May, July and August. The September meeting will coincide with the annual picnic and playoff Saturday. There will be no general meeting in the months of January, April and June. #

**NEXT DUGOUT CHATTER:**  
**January 2009**

## SAFETY RULES

From Jerry Jodice,  
Safety Chairman

Many softball rules are focused on minimizing and preventing injuries. That is why we have another (double) base, orange in color, at first base. It is why the runner from third base may NOT touch home plate to score (see Rule 6, #7). If the runner does touch the plate, the umpire calls him or her out immediately.

Rules also are designed to diminish the likelihood of runner-fielder collisions at second and third bases. The runner should be called out without hesitation if a collision occurs, unless the fielder is guilty of obstructing the runner attempting to advance to the next base (see Rule 2: The Playing Field #8 Infielder Obstruction). If the fielder is not making a play on the runner, the fielder must stay out of the runway (the runner's best path to the next base) or an obstruction must be called and the runner is awarded the next base.

Again, strict enforcement of these rules is designed to minimize collisions and injuries.

**LEAGUE SAFETY SPECIALISTS.** Five GSSCS safety specialists have been accepted to undergo Red Cross Instructor Training this year so they may teach and certify Golden Senior and park district volunteers in First Aid, CPR and AED classes each year.

Once the specialists have completed the instructor training, they will meet with Safety Chairman Jerry Jodice to plan a schedule of safety classes for Golden Senior players, managers,

non-playing assistants, umpires, and park district personnel wishing to receive instruction and certificates. Each class will be limited to 12 people. If interested in becoming a certified ETP (Emergency Trained Personnel) volunteer, call your **League Safety Specialist** (Area Code **916** listed below) and request that your name, phone number, and preferred date and time be considered for future classes.

**League 1 - Ray Soden**  
747-4217  
**Leagues 2 & 3 - Trudy Smartt**  
973-8269  
**Leagues 3 & 4 - Bob Smartt**  
973-8269  
**Leagues 4 & 5 - Alan Riker**  
483-4736  
**Leagues 1 & 6 - Jerry Jodice**  
349-8949 #

## SUNSHINE & HEALTH REPORT

**REST IN PEACE: Ernie Wise** passed away on Oct. 16 at Kaiser Hospital. He was 72. "He really loved the game and gave it his all right up until the end," said George Hodsdon. Ernie joined the Golden Seniors in 1986 and played outfield until 1996, when ill health forced him to retire. He returned in 2004, playing Monday mornings, and played halfway through the 2008 season for Bob Schwan's Wion's Body Shop, when ill health again forced him to retire. #

## FALL-WINTER PRACTICE GAMES

The Fall-Winter Practice Games at Carmichael Park are held Tuesday and Thursday mornings, weather and holidays permitting.

Practice begins about 8:45 with each player hitting five or six balls. Games commence about 9 a.m.

The first 22 players to arrive sign up and are divided into two teams to play a practice game on Field #3. Players are encouraged to play different positions and give others a chance at popular spots. Keeping in shape and improving are more important than winning a practice game.

Players who sign up after the first 22 move to Field #4 to continue batting practice. When the first practice game on Field #3 ends, the late arrivals form a team to play the winners of the first game. Players are free to stay only as long as their schedules permit. Others fill in as needed. All ASA and GSSC club rules apply on bat and ball restrictions, and safety rules are observed.

Golden Seniors participating in the practices are guests of the Wednesday 65+ league and its commissioner, Ernie Kidwell. They may be asked to provide service for park needs in return for free use of the fields. Questions: Kidwell at 489-3701, or his assistant, Casper Grief, 381-0124. #

## CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON SET

The annual Christmas luncheon for Monday Day League members and friends is set for Monday, Dec. 8, 11:30 to 1:30 at Luau Gardens, 1890 Arden Way. RSVP to George Hodsdon (481-9304) and pay \$10.50 at the luncheon. #

## RULES COMMITTEE FORGES CONSENSUS -- FROM PAGE 1

on Tuesday mornings. These leagues are free to play under rules as they see fit.

Proposals include:

**Courtesy runners** -- The same courtesy runner cannot be used more than twice in a game and no more than once in an inning. The courtesy runner need not be the player who made the last out or was the last batter in the prior inning.

**Substitutes** -- A player used as a substitute must hit at the bottom of the order, be limited to singles and play either catcher or right field. The substitute must be a player deemed to be a lower-round draftee than the player he is replacing. This means no first-round player will be eligible to be a substitute in regular season and playoff games. And, if a team is missing a fifth, seventh and eighth-round player, the substitute or substitutes can be no higher than the sixth and eighth round. A last-rounder has to be replaced by a last-rounder. (Teams are still limited to two substitutes, and unassigned waiting list players, even though they are unrated, still have priority to play as substitutes.)

**Base-running** -- ASA interference and

obstruction rules will be strictly enforced for outs or the awarding of an additional base.

**Home Plate Safety** -- A runner from third base must veer to his or her right outside a designated line eight feet to the runner's right of home plate or be an automatic out.

**Small Ball** -- Women will be required to bat with the same size ball as men.

A final draft of the revised rules is expected to be before the board on Dec. 4 and, if adopted, could be before the general meeting for action that night, or at the following general meeting, currently scheduled for February. Revised rule books are planned to be printed in time to be handed out at March practice games.

President Mendonsa and the board expressed their appreciation to the L2-6 Rules Committee: Chairman Jerry Nevis and members Peter Anagnoston, Bob Jones, Don Wall, Bret Wangan and Dave Vargo, and umpires Tom Bussey, Umpire-in-Chief Freddie Miller and Cloicec Wade. #

## LEAGUE COMMISSIONERS ARE APPROVED

The board, at its October meeting, approved commissioners for six leagues and the new provisional seventh league that will begin play in 2009 if there are enough sign-ups by players 70 and over.

The new league, proposed a year ago by Larry Campbell, would be patterned after the select competitive League 6, which is for players 60 or over. The new league would play Tuesday mornings (10:15 a.m.) at the Complex.

Approved by the board as 2009 league commissioners:

League 1 -- Jim McNamara (424-1402); League 2 -- Cloicec Wade (393-5809) (assisted by Don Pooler and Jim Wait); League 3 -- Jerry Toenyas (354-4126); League 4 -- Dick Mathews (530-672-2689); League 5 -- Monta Litle (606-4776) (assisted by Don Wall); League 6 -- Victor Torres (784-7910); League 7 -- Larry Campbell (485-4843) on a provisional basis to recruit managers and players. #

## **LEAGUE 2: SORE-KNEES AND ALL, VARGO FLIRTS WITH .800 MARK**

Dave Vargo, despite being two years overdue for knee replacement surgery, was the first-ever GSSC three-consecutive-year ironman playing in four leagues. And he flirted with the magic .800 mark, leading League 2 (Tuesday morning) with an average of .796.

He also contended for the League 6 triple crown (batting average, homers and runs batted in). Dave would have hit over .800 in L2 if playoff games were included. He also hit .800 as a part-time Wednesday night player in 2007, but didn't have enough at-bats to qualify.

Vargo also notched the first club home run trifecta on May 15 when he circled the bases in Leagues 2, 3 and 6. Further evidence of his prowess: He had 50 hits and five walks in 55 plate

appearances during a three-month hot streak in the 2006 Sierra League.

Now 63, Vargo said that as a much younger and faster leadoff man he hit over .900 in recreational leagues (Louisville, KY in 1982 and San Mateo, CA in 1988.)

The GSSC club commissioner said his batting success is not due to formal training, but rather strategies that include hitting to all corners of the field, exploiting gaps in the defense, and trying to avoid hitting to the best defensive players -- shortstop and left-center-fielder. He offers this advice: "Wait as long as possible and keep your eye on the ball, which is easier said than done."

With his knees still a problem, he says he will have to play less in 2009, ceding the "ironman" distinction. #

**CHECK THE LEAGUE WEBSITE FOR LATE-BREAKING NEWS & UPDATES #**



*Linda McCollum (left) and Jane Lincoln, two of the outstanding women playing in League 3 on Tuesday nights, were rivals in the L3 championship game. Photo by Paul Lucky.*

## **ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS FOR SALE**

**FUND-RAISER FOR THE GSSC  
LAST FIVE BOOKS ON HAND ...  
LAST CHANCE ... BUY THEM AS  
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**CALL LOU COPPOLA -- 444-6138**



*GSSC umpires Jules Morganstern (left) and Hank Fontes worked Picnic Day playoff games last September. (Photo by Paul Lucky.)*

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS -- 2008-2009**

President Ray Mendonsa ... 686-3894  
First Vice President Fred Fischer ... 685-5044 (Responsible for team sponsorships.)  
Second Vice President Pete Ward ... 989-4722 (Responsible for team uniforms.)  
Treasurer Glen Cole ... 966-4561  
Secretary Mickey Schleicher ... 239-9230  
Player Agent Tom Sansone ... 686-1654 (Responsible for player applications, player substitutes, waiting lists.)  
Club Commissioner David Vargo ... 689-7061 (Responsible for league rules, oversees all league commissioners.)

***NEXT GSSC GENERAL MEETING:  
THURSDAY, DEC. 4, 7:30 P.M. SITE: VFW  
HALL, 2764 STOCKTON BLVD.***

**TELEPHONE HOTLINES**

**Club Answering Machine**  
(managed by Don Shank): 491-1721  
for meeting news and field conditions.

**Phone or Address Changes:**  
391-3938

**Player Applications:** 686-1654

**Sunshine & Health:** Trudy Smartt  
973-8269

**GSSC #3912 Blood Bank:**  
456-1500

**Safety Chair (Jerry Jodice)** 349-8949

**Entertainment Chair Lou Coppola**  
444-6138

**Dugout Chatter (Ron Roach,**  
editor) 422-2500

([coachrwr@comcast.net](mailto:coachrwr@comcast.net))

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Ray Mendonsa, President  
2324 Migration Court  
Elk Grove, CA 95757

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