

# DUGOUT CHATTER

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

## **NIGHT LEAGUE PLAYER TRYOUTS SET FOR JAN. 31**

Night leagues (L3,4,5) tryouts for new players are scheduled at noon, Saturday, Jan. 31 at the Sacramento Softball Complex. Player Agent Tom Sansone and Commissioner Dave Vargo will outfit new players with numbered jerseys of different colors so managers will be able to sit in the stands and identify players signed up for their specific league.

Tryouts for Monday morning (League 1 for players 70 and over) and Tuesday morning League 7 (the new 70+ competitive/select league) are scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on Feb. 2 at Carmichael Park. (Note this tryouts location is NOT the Howe Avenue park where League 1 normally plays games.)

Tryouts for Tuesday 9 a.m. League 2 (60 and over) and Tuesday 10:30 a.m. League 6 (60 and over competitive/select) are scheduled for 11 a.m. on Feb. 3 at the Complex.

Sansone and the rest of the Board of Directors, who met Jan. 8, urged members to recruit more players as all leagues with the exception of Tuesday night (League 3) needed more signups at this writing. Contact Sansone (686-1654) for applications which also are available on from the Golden Seniors site on the Internet, [www.gsscs.org](http://www.gsscs.org).

Vargo said the Tuesday night league (L3) has reached 72-player capacity and a waiting list is expected. However, Wednesday and Thursday night leagues (L4 and L5) each has about 60 players signed up and it is likely that teams may have to start the season with 11 players. Eight-team L1 has about five players short of 96. Monday day (see page 2)

### **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

*Welcome to a new season. I would like to take this time to thank all of you for signing up for a new season. I would like to also thank all of you for assisting in getting all the needed work completed for the upcoming season. Special thanks to Jerry Nevis and his group for working so hard to complete the changes to the Rule Book -- and keeping it as simple as possible for all the night leagues. Thanks to Jerry Jodice for taking the lead and getting more of our members CPR/Defibrillator qualified. It will be comforting knowing we have the extra trained members out there on the fields. Most of all, thank all of you for signing up to play and keeping the dream of our founder members alive and strong.*

*Thank you so much for allowing me to serve all the membership of the Golden Seniors Softball Club of Sacramento. -- Ray Mendonsa.*

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**GENERAL  
MEETING:  
MONDAY,  
FEB. 2,  
7:30 p.m.  
VFW HALL  
2764  
Stockton  
Blvd.**

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## TRYOUT DATES SET (From Page 1)

League 1 has added a ninth team. L7 had 45 signups, including entries from the Sacramento Blues 70s and the Pirates 70s tournament teams.

Leagues 2 and 6 (which play at 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., respectively, on Tuesdays, have the most urgent need for players. Vargo called on L2 players who haven't signed up for L6 to consider doing so, as well as 60-and-over night leaguers who could also play during the day on Tuesdays. L6 teams may have 11 players per team, so there would have to be a liberal substitution policy involving players from L2 early games, Vargo said.

"Lot's of applications are coming through," Sansone said, noting that the fact that L1 is adding a team should lessen concern that the new L7 would reduce the player pool for L1. He also said there were 30 new players coming into GSSC, including four women signed up for L3. They mostly have husbands or boyfriends in the league but for 2009 there will be a GSSC first: A father-daughter combination. The dad is Bob Rogers, player-sponsor of the Jolly Rogers on Tuesday nights.

**Sponsors Needed:** The league also needs more team sponsorships as the number of teams is increasing from 38 to 43 with the addition of the new select/competitive League 7, which is to play Tuesday mornings at the Complex. Anyone knowing of a potential sponsor should contact Fred Fischer, 1st vice president, at 685-5044.

**Shortened Practice Schedule:** League managers will draft their squads during February and get set for practice games in mid-March. Vargo said the number of practice games will be reduced as the Complex will not be open for play the first week of March and is tied up with a tournament during the

second week. Thus GSSC practice games at the Complex are to be held the weeks of March 16 and 23.

The regular season begins the week of March 30.

**Umpire Pay:** At the request of Umpire-in-Chief Freddie Miller, the board approved Vargo's proposal for a \$1-per-game increase in pay for umpires, which would bring them to \$22 for solo work and \$16 apiece when paired with another umpire. Vargo said the going rate for ASA umpires is \$25-\$30 per game. This will add about \$430 to the umpire budget, which was \$11,400 last year. It is budgeted for \$13,400 in 2009 due to the additional League 7.

**Scorekeeper Pay:** The board agreed to increase pay for scorekeepers by \$1 per game, bringing it to \$10. It was noted that the scorekeeper duties also include maintaining detailed statistics.

**More Scorekeepers Needed:** Cloicew Wade, L2 commissioner, has issued a call for additional scorekeepers. Larry Campbell, who is acting commissioner of L7, has issued a similar call, noting that scorekeepers for L2 can also work L7 games on the same mornings. Vargo said he also has communicated the need to officials at the Complex.

**Club Finances:** Complex field rental costs have increased 30% since 2006, according to Glen Cole, club treasurer. He also noted that the club in 2008 budgeted for a loss of \$15,000, as recommended by the audit committee. And this year's \$20 dues increase for most categories was designed to maintain a prudent reserve for contingencies. On the positive front, Vargo said that while the Complex has been hiking fees, the city's Howe Avenue fields (where L1 plays on Mondays) is not increasing the field fees until June 30, when a \$1 (or 2%) increase will take effect.

**Award of Merit:** George Hodsdon and Dante Ciardella say they want the general membership to submit nominations to (see page 3)

## TRYOUT DATES SET (From Page 2)

the committee that selects Award of Merit honorees for their outstanding service to the club.

**Accountant Help is Praised:** The board expressed gratitude to Jay Evans of The Tax Office for providing the league with accountant services free of charge.

**Smoking Ban to be Enforced:** Vargo said Complex officials have notified the league that its anti-smoking regulations will be strictly enforced. Smoking is not allowed at the Complex except for the parking lot, at least 50 feet outside the gate.

**Golf Tourney -- Mark Your Calendar:** The 2009 GSSC golf tournament is set for Friday, May 1 at Lincoln Hills. There will be a 1 p.m. shotgun start with a scramble foursome format, similar to last May's successful event at the same site. Bill Knoblauch is again heading up the organizing committee. Also involved are Jerry Toenyas and Ron Roach. They hope others will lend a hand. More details will be forthcoming. Knoblauch can be reached at 408-5501. #

## FIRST AID TRAINING SESSION SIGN-UPS: HOW TO HELP SAVE LIVES

Safety Chairman Jerry Jodice has scheduled training in beginning first aid/CPR/AED at the Complex for Saturdays Jan. 24 and 31 from 9:30 to 4:30. Managers and players are encouraged to participate in the no-cost training. The general membership has approved expenses of up to \$2,900 to provide training for up to 12 persons at each of the classes. Instructors are Trudy and Bob Smartt and Allen Riker. Contact Jodice (349-8949) or any of the safety specialists listed below.

For day league players and managers, training sessions on Mondays were set for Jan 12 and 26. Night leaguers could sit in on those classes on a space-available basis. Register with Jodice if you want to attend any of the sessions, or contact these safety specialists:

Bob and Trudy Smartt (973-8269), Ramon Soden (652-0808, cell 747-4217), Allen Riker (485-9567).

Jodice also has compiled a list of players who are Red Cross-certified for 2009. "If you are certified, please call me and provide your name, phone number and date of certification," Jodice said. "Our goal is to have one emergency trained person per team for each softball season (manager, player or umpire), or two or more ETPs available per game to help the other during emergencies."

### **Safety Note: Softball Practice Preparation.**

Jodice offers this practice warm-up advice: Making your muscles and body more flexible, resilient and less susceptible to injury during the softball season requires appropriate exercise NOW. Don't wait for the season to begin!

Fast-twitch muscles need careful conditioning. Preparing your legs for fast starts and stops must be done in modification stages to accustom your body to sudden moves without jolting or overstretching muscles early in the exercise. Warming up for running exertion should begin slowly, toning up muscles effortlessly, without straining, jarring or tearing hamstrings. It is essential that you leisurely take your time to prepare your legs for well-honed fast-twitch movements. It may take a few days. Don't rush it!

Swinging a bat effectively, likewise, requires fast-twitch shoulder muscle development. It takes time, energy, resilience, dedication and astute supervision to adjust coordination each year to hitting the ball correctly. Every batter gets in a rut eventually. Often we try so hard to end the rut, we do more harm to our swing and thus our body in the process. A batting coach or camera may help to correct the flaw. Meanwhile, keep your shoulder muscles loose by swinging a couple of bats both ways BEFORE you come to bat. #

## L1 MVP and MIP: Wehmeyer and Dempsey

Mimi's Restaurants captured the League 1 (Mondays) championship in 2008 and also produced the league's most valuable and most improved players: George Wehmeyer and Ken Dempsey.

(Editor's Note: L1 does not have scorekeepers to maintain batting averages, so there was no way to recognize statistical performances, which Dugout Chatter has done for the other GSSC leagues. L1 Commissioner Jim McNamara was asked to poll managers on their choices for MVP and MIP. Wehmeyer and Dempsey were named on four of six possible ballots, as managers could not vote for their own players and one manager declined to participate.

Mimi's manager, John Chatfield, said shortstop Wehmeyer "is really a good all-around player. He always shows up. You can depend on it. He hits very well and he rarely makes an error." Furthermore, Chatfield credited the MVP's stabilizing influence as an encouraging and inspiring teammate for the high level of team comradeship. Chatfield said the 72-year-old, who joined the GSSC in 1991, is a line-drive type of hitter who reached base by hit, walk or error an estimated 80% of the time in 2008.

Dempsey, who turns 72 this year, joined the GSSC in June 2004. Last year was his second season playing on Mondays. When Ken came into the league, he had difficulty catching and hitting, Chatfield said, but "he's a decent hitter now and he catches the ball. He played left field and did a very good job." The manager estimated Dempsey's on-base average in the .700 range. #

## 2009 General Meetings Schedule

Unless noted below, meetings are on Monday nights, beginning at 7:30 p.m., at the VFW Hall, 2764 Stockton Blvd.

**February 2**

**March 2**

**April 6** (Possibly at the North Highlands/Antelope VFW Hall)

**May 4**

(No June Meeting)

**July 6** (Nominations for 2009-10 Board of Directors)

**August 3** (Election of 2009-10 Board of Directors)

**September 19** (in conjunction with the annual Picnic/Playoffs Saturday at the Sacramento Softball Complex)

## TOP BATTERS SAY HITTING IS THEIR THING

League 5 batting champion **Bob Del Chiaro** turned in a .759 season. Combining power with average, Del Chiaro, 58, led League 4 in hitting in 2007, with an .817 average.

He said "pitch selection" is crucial to success at the plate. "If I'm slumping, I'm swinging at bad pitches." Patience is a key, he added.

Bob also takes plenty of batting practice, including almost weekly with the Wilson Trophy AAA tournament team. Batting practice also is a three-generational deal with the Del Chairros. Bob's dad, Marino, who plays in L1, and son Austin (10), a youth-league star, also take part in BP. Bob said he began playing baseball year-round because "I was too short for basketball and not tough enough for football. I wanted to play football but my baseball coach" convinced him otherwise. He was a standout baseball pitcher who still sports one of the stronger outfield arms in the Golden Seniors.

**Norm Blackwell Jr.**, a slick-fielding shortstop in L3, hit

.758 in 2008. It was the second year in GSSC for the 51-year-old son of Norm Blackwell Sr., a L1 player. The Blackwells also include two younger brothers who played professional baseball. Norm Jr. said that when he was looking to play professionally, it was the 1970s, and it was a lot tougher then. Still, he was a standout infielder in high school, Consumnes River College and in a semi-pro league. "Hitting is my thing. And it was as a hardball player, too. I went to batting cages and hit off the fence."

While he occasionally can reach the fences ("I still have my wrists") he said he normally tries to place his hits. He often hits behind the runners as a No. 3 hitter in the lineup. He also has perfected the art of hitting hard ground balls through infield holes. He usually avoids going up the middle, he said, because he doesn't want to risk injuring the pitcher. Norm said he doesn't really care about his batting average as long as he contributes to his team. "I'm not worried about my batting average; I'm just trying to win."

The L6 batting champion, **Rich Edwards**, is a former high school baseball coach

who plays a fundamentally smooth game whether he is patrolling left-centerfield or shortstop. And he hits for high average and power. His .712 average paced the 60+ select competitive league in 2008. Edwards, 62, has two Golden Seniors seasons under his belt. "I hadn't played competitively for 18 years" before 2007, he said, so there was plenty of rust on his game. But he now plays virtually throughout the year and has steadily improved with practice.

He credits Al Tirapelli (his Sierra League coach on Thursdays) for tips that enabled him to hit more effectively to the opposite field. He called it a two-step process: Drop the right foot back one step and step forward with the other foot so the body turns toward right field. Don't dip the right shoulder. "It really works," Edwards said.

(Editor's Note: See the November-December issue of Dugout Chatter for articles on **Bill Christian**, the L4 and overall GSSC champion at .847, and **Dave Vargo**, who paced L2 with an average of .796.) #

### CLUB LEAGUE COMMISSIONERS FOR 2009

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). #

**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: MONDAY,  
FEB. 2, 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:**

Henry Low 391-3938

**Player Applications:** Tom  
Sansone 686-1654

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

**GSSC #3912 Blood Bank:**

456-1500

**Safety:** Jerry Jodice  
349-8949

**Entertainment:** 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  
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Elk Grove, CA 95757

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