
DUGOUT CHATTER

ELECTRONIC EDITION – WINTER 2020

GENERAL MEETING NEWS: PLAYERS STILL NEEDED

Urgent calls were made via President Bill Hill's email blasts and at the Feb. 10 general meeting for signups for the 2020 season, which is scheduled to begin the week of March 16. Meanwhile, the club's Recruitment Committee continues its work.

The season will run until mid- or late-September, depending on availability of a Saturday date at the Sacramento Softball Complex. It is likely that by the time members read this, the board will have settled on specifics for a season-ending event and a schedule for league championship games.

Signup Update. Player Agent Dave Tanner reported that Monday morning League 7 had 55 signups and was in good shape for its player draft, as were the Tuesday morning leagues at the Complex, L2 with 58 and L6 with 68. As of Feb. 10, there were 423 players signed up in nine leagues (including multi-league players).

Tanner said all leagues can use more players, and a decision to go with four or six teams rests with sufficient signups. Leagues with the greatest need: L3 (Tuesday night) for minimum age men 50 and women 40, had only 35 players; L5 on Thursday night, for men 48 and women 40, had only 30.

L1 (70 for men, 60 for women, on Monday had 44, needing four more for 48 and four teams of 12 players. L8 on Tuesday at Howe Park had 44 signups, while L9, also Tuesdays at Howe Park, had 39. Both are for men 75 and over and women 60 and over. The goal for the Howe Park Monday and Tuesday (See Page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE: General meeting news; Rocky Wilkerson and Bobby Ellison receive club Award of Merit; Twelve new life members are inducted; Club reserves 22 Sports Leisure Vacations seats for a Giants-A's game in Oakland and Dodgers game in San Francisco; Two new club sponsors; Club contacts.

SIGN UP NOW: FROM PAGE 1)

leagues is to have enough for four teams of 13 to 14 players. L8 and L9 is to have 13-14 players per team.

Leagues planned to conduct player drafts, starting Feb. 29 for the Tuesday morning L2 and L6, which have new commissioners: Russ Barnes for L6 and John Long for L2. The night leagues, L3, L4 and L5, were tentatively scheduled to draft on March 5, while the Howe Park Monday leagues (L1 and L7) and Tuesday leagues, (L8 and L9) were to draft on March 7.

Chuck Knutson, chair of the Recruitment Committee, detailed efforts to attract more players, including numerous visits to recreation centers and local tournament site.

Knutson stressed that recruitment is a year-round effort, not just in the final weeks before 2020 teams are drafted and the new season is about to begin. Prospective players can find applications on the club's website. New players are needed during the season to fill in for those who are injured or on vacations.

Recruiting Boosts. Mark Hoffmann, owner of Sports Leisure Vacations, a longtime club sponsor, is helping club recruitment by giving the effort a plug on his travel news radio program (Sundays, 3 p.m. on KFBK). John Long has volunteered to work on public service announcements for our non-profit club. Leroy John Adams, VFW District 7 chaplain, said he will spread word of the senior softball program among VFW posts in the area. VFW Post 67 is a club sponsor and hosts the general meetings.

Email Blasts. President Hill said his email blast alerting members to the general meeting was opened by 49 percent of those who received them. Fewer than 40 percent clicked on the link to the applications. He also said the lagging signups could be attributed, in part, to the decision not to mail renewal applications to all players at the end of the 2019 season.

Call for New Blood. Hill also noted that the same people have served on the Board of Directors as long as six years, so "we've got to get some new blood" in leadership posts. The club has nominations in July, followed by an August election. Interested? Contact any board member.

New Rules. Ellison announced rule changes for 2020, including 65 minutes for night leagues and 70 minutes for day games, which had been as much as 80 minutes, which he said was unfair as it made umpires and scorekeepers work much longer for day games than night games, for the same pay.

Hats? The club also is liberalizing the "hat rule." New hats will be issued to those who request them, as the cost has become a budget issue to provide new hats to returning players, according to 2nd VP Bob Smartt. Players can wear any hat they want, or no hat at all. Club officers have said they are simply tired of enforcing the club hat rule. This also means players who want to wear the broadest brimmed hats they can find to protect from sun on ears, neck, etc., will not have to find a GSSCS logo to attach. Smartt also said the club will use the same quality balls as last year.

Another rule will require courtesy runners from home to start six feet back from the previous point. This applies to L1, L7, L8 and L9. The Rules Committee continued the policy that disallows "Senior Softball" bats in L1, L8 and L9. (See Page 3)

(From Page 2) A proposal to use the one-and-one rule (start each at-bat with one ball and one strike) to speed up games was tabled until next year.

Safety Report. Safety Chairman Paul Rogers announced that a number of members signed up for training — or re-training — for CPR and AED. Those who took the course last year can take the refresher courses free of charge. The club pays for member training in life-saving techniques. The first training course for 2020 was set for Feb. 24. Members interested in future training can contact Rogers at 916 206-1605. #

AWARD OF MERIT HONOREES: ROCKY AND BOBBY

Two longtime leaders of the Golden Seniors — Rocky Wilkerson and Bobby Ellison — received the club's 2019 Award of Merit at the Feb. 10 general meeting.

There was an emotional moment when Arnold Wilkerson, 85 on March 2, who has been in the club since 1989 and been a Golden Seniors Man of the Year (forerunner of Award of Merit), presented the award to his son. Rocky, who turns 62 this year, joined the club in 2012 and has served as a team manager as well as following in his dad's footsteps on the Board of Directors as the club's first vice president. "As soon as I turned 50, he was on me to sign up," Rocky said. "And I followed in his footsteps on the board and as an Award of Merit winner."



President Bill Hill presented the award to Bobby Ellison, who has served multiple terms as club



commissioner. Hill said Ellison convinced him to serve as club president and Bill urged Bobby to serve as club commissioner, who enforces club rules and appoints league commissioners.

Bobby, 67, joined the club in 2011 and has served as a league commissioner and team manager. He has coached youth baseball, softball and basketball, and, as a professional bowler, has quite naturally been an outstanding slow-pitch softball pitcher.

The annual awards are approved by a committee of former award winners. #

12 NEW LIFE MEMBERS ARE FETED AT GENERAL MEETING

The club's life membership class of 2020 was recognized at the Feb. 10 general meeting, emceed by Jim Lortz, former club president clad in tuxedo and tennis shoes for the occasion.

As he says every year, Lortz described the new life members as among "the few and the lucky" to have been fortunate enough to play a sport they love for so many years in such a great softball club.

The 12 new life members, eligible upon attaining 20 continuous years in the club and reaching the age of 75, or 15 years and 80, are:

Dave Avery, 75, with 16 years in the club; Glen Cole, 77, also with 16 years; Lee Farnsworth, 83, a 10-year member; Bob Flink, 80, a 15-year member; Keith Gittins, 83, a 12-year member; Ken Gull, 80, a 15-year member; Jerry Horton, 75, a 26-year member; Jim Mays, 75, a 21-year member; Bob Mehler, 80, a 10-year member; Freddie Miller, 81, who rejoined the club 10 years ago, but had many more years that were not continuous; Ronney Smith, 75, a 23-year member, and Jack Tibbetts, 80, a 13-year member.

Miller, who has served as a club commissioner, chief umpire, team manager, praised the current and past club directors for forming new leagues that have "expanded the age for all of us to play senior softball." He commended the club for providing a "real safe venue for us, with rules to prevent us from getting hurt, such as no sliding" and allowing players to run through the bases. Miller played professional golf and baseball and is a member of the Native American Hall of Fame for those two sports as well as basketball.

Tibbetts noted that he is healthy and eager to play in 2020. He said he signed up to play after issues that included a three-way bypass in 2019. He is a two-time cancer survivor. Lortz recalled being teammates when the Solons won a national senior baseball championship in Kansas City.

Horton: "This is a great group here" and "I wouldn't give it up for anything."

Mays: "I've had some good and bad times ... but most of all I have enjoyed playing with different guys. I don't know what I'd be doing if I wasn't playing ball." #



Photo at left: top row, Jim Lortz, Keith Gittins, Jack Tibbetts, Bob Flink; front row: Freddie Miller, Jerry Horton, Glen Cole, Jim Mays. Not present: Dave Avery, Lee Farnsworth, Ken Gull, Bob Mehler, Ronney Smith.

GENERAL MEETING DATES FOR 2020

The 2020 schedule for general membership meetings: March 9, May 11, July 13, Aug. 10. Meetings usually begin at 7 p.m. at the VFW Post 67 Hall on Stockton Boulevard. An additional meeting may be arranged to swear in the new Board of Directors. The seven-member board is elected in August based on nominations at the July meeting. #

TRIPS ON TAP FOR GIANTS-A'S AND DODGERS-GIANTS GAMES

The club has reserved 22 spots for Sports Leisure Vacations trips to these major league games: Giants at Athletics on June 7 and Dodgers at Giants on Aug. 13.

Sign up by calling Sports Leisure Vacations at 916 361-2051, and say you're with the Golden Seniors Softball Club. You'll be asked for your contact information. They will be able to answer your questions, including payment details. The deadline to submit payment to Sports Leisure Vacations is 60 days before the game, or April 7 for the Giants-A's game, and June 13 for the Dodgers-Giants game. Including a \$5 discount, the cost of the motor coach roundtrip, game ticket, refreshments on the coach, is \$119 for the June 7 game, which starts at 1:07 p.m. The price for the 12:45 p.m. Aug. 13 game is \$134.

If space is available 60 days before the game, additional spots can be purchased, but without the \$5 discount for the Golden Seniors block of 22 seats, which is about half the capacity of the coach.

Sports Leisure has an 11-game schedule of baseball game trips in 2020. For more information on these or other baseball trips, such as Pilgrimages to see iconic ballparks and learn about America's Pastime, go to www.sportsleisure.com. #

SUNSHINE AND HEALTH

Trudy Smartt, the club's Sunshine and Health chairperson, said she had no news to report at the Feb. 10 meeting. Meantime, members who hear of a member who has passed away are encouraged to notify Trudy. With the demise of newspapers, especially in the print format, fewer obituaries are published, and not everyone chooses to read the paper online. #

TWO NEW SPONSORS FOR 2020

Two new sponsors for 2020 have been announced by Rocky Wilkerson, club 1st VP. They are Gold River Floors, Inc., and Impax Health. Both were recruited by member Dave Terry.

Returning sponsors, some sponsoring more than one team, are:

Automated Electric, Avalon Hearing, John Brendle Consulting, Club Raven, Dibo's (Tony DiBernardo), EG Threads, Elk Grove Lock & Safe, Espanol Italian Family Restaurant, George Gross, Harper Properties, Bill Hill, Hilltop Tavern, Jerry Jodice, Joel Jaspin, Jolly Rogers (Bob Rogers), Larry's Plumbing, La Rosa's Sports Cafe, Livingston Concrete, Merrill Bookkeeping (RAMBIT), Nielsen Properties & Appraisal, Old Soul Co. at 40 Acres in Oak Park, Overhead Door Company of Sacramento Inc., Photo Finish, RDR Financial Services Inc., Reinwald Insurance, Sam's Hofbrau, Sports Leisure Vacations, Tanner and Associates, VFW Post 67, Yancey Co. #

ABOUT THE DUGOUT CHATTER

The club newsletter is published in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. The online edition, on the club's website, often includes photos and longer articles. The print edition, limited in space, is mailed to those who do not have Internet access. Members who get the Dugout Chatter via regular mail and prefer the online edition, need to contact Dave Tanner (916) 216-1941. #

CLUB CONTACTS

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS President: Bill Hill 916-804-2243. First Vice President: Rocky Wilkerson 916-595-2941. Second Vice President: Bob Smartt 916-973-8269. Treasurer: Don Wall 916-434-8308 Secretary: Deanna Sesso 916-955-8195. Player Agent: Dave Tanner 916-216-1941. Club Commissioner: Bob Ellison 916-212-7498. Club Safety Coordinator: Paul Rogers 916-206-1605.

TELEPHONE HOTLINE Club Answering Machine (managed by Deanna Sesso): 916-491-1721 for meeting news and field conditions. For phone or address changes, and renewal applications, contact Player Agent Dave Tanner at 916-216-1941. Player applications are online at the club web site. Sunshine & Health: Trudy Smartt 916-973-8269; Rules: Bob Ellison 916-212-7498; GSSC #3912 Blood Bank: 916-456-1500; Dugout Chatter: Ron Roach, editor 916-422-2500. #

WEBSITE VOLUNTEER NEEDED: President Bill Hill, at the August general meeting, said the club still needed a volunteer webmaster to keep the site current. This task involves the postings of club news and photos – including videos! Ideally, the webmaster would enlist an assistant to share the load. #

