

# DUGOUT CHATTER

ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION OF THE GOLDEN SENIORS SOFTBALL CLUB OF SACRAMENTO ([WWW.GSSCS.ORG](http://WWW.GSSCS.ORG)) -- APRIL 2012

## **BOARD DISCUSSES CHANGES IN PLAYER PRIORITY STATUS FOR ANNUAL DRAFTS; L-3 COMMITTEE DRAFT PROCESS; SETS SEPT. 29 PICNIC DATE**

*From Tom Sansone, club president*

The Board of Directors, meeting March 27, made lots of progress on several topics:

**Standing Rule #13 on priority status for returning players in the annual draft process.** The Board realizes the confusion and frustration the priority system has caused many members of the club over the years. The Board, in particular the Player Agent, has also struggled with this system. At this point, the Board is looking for something more simple and direct.

After considerable discussion, the Board was uncomfortable with proposed changes by the Rules Committee. Initially, the Board felt a melding of the existing priority system and the committee's recommendations might be the best thing to do for the 2013 season. However, there was also some discussion surrounding the elimination of Standing Rule #13 entirely.

In place of a priority system, for the purpose of draft and league assignment, a "first-come, first-serve" system might serve the club better. The details of this possibility have not, as yet, been flushed out. What we did discuss is the possibility of assigning members to leagues based solely on the date of their application receipt (along with the appropriate amount of dues and fees). Essentially, the first 72 members to submit applications and dues to the Player Agent would be assigned to the draft in any league of six 12-player teams. If a member wants to sign up for one league or five leagues, as long as he is within the number of 72, he will be included in the draft for any league.

Using the application submission date (Dec. 1) as the key, we are hoping that would motivate members to get their apps in early to get what they want in terms of leagues. Using the application submission date, the first 72 guys signed up in each league would get into the draft. Once we hit the magic number of 72 (for six teams of 12 players each) those filing after that number is achieved would be on the wait list -- regardless of their length of (SEE PAGE 2)

**NEXT  
GENERAL  
MEETING:  
7:30 p.m.,  
Monday,  
May 14, 2012  
VFW Hall, 2784  
Stockton Blvd.  
(No Meeting in  
April)**

**IN THIS ISSUE ...  
Club News: Board  
considers changes to  
draft priority status.**

**Club's hotline voice  
to change from  
Shank to Smartt**

**Rain impacts early  
schedules**

**Safety: Club Needs  
New Safety  
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Directors and Other  
Important Contacts**

## CLUB NEWS (From Page 1)

time in the club. New club members, who apply early, would actually get into a league's draft before a long-time club member who filed a late application. This would also mean a club member who filed early and also filed for multiple leagues would get into all those leagues regardless of how many they signed up for. The priority status would not hamper their inclusion on the draft list -- as long as they applied early. We will ask for input on this idea -- the elimination of the status list -- from the Rules Committee.

While the Board has not finalized any thoughts on changes to Rule #13, we anticipate further discussion over the next several months. The Board would appreciate any input from (the Rules Committee) on this issue before any final plans are made. Of course, any changes to the priority system would be implemented for the 2013 season.

**L-3 DRAFT PROCESS.** The Board decided to begin evaluation of the use of a committee process for the assignment of players to L-3 teams (Tuesday nights). This system, instead of a regular player draft, was begun four years ago as an experiment to see if it would be more effective than the normal draft process to produce more competitive teams.

**PICNIC.** The Board wants the Picnic Committee to explore options for the picnic this year. It is scheduled Sept. 29 at Howe Avenue Park. The Board still hasn't made decisions on league playoffs. #

## New Voice in Line for GSSCS Hot Line

The "voice" of the Golden Seniors, silver-tongued Don Shank, is packing it in but fear not as Trudy Smartt has agreed to take over the club's telephone "hot line." (491-1721)

Shank operated the club's answering machine for the past three years and did an outstanding job, said Club President Tom Sansone. While Don will be a tough act to follow, Trudy promises to perform with her usual exuberance.

"I told him (Sansone) I would try it," said Ms. Smartt, who has also been a team manager and is believed to be the first woman to pitch a complete game GSSCS playoff victory (Tuesday nights) in 2010. Trudy also has served the club as Sunshine & Health director. She and her husband, Bob, joined the Golden Seniors in 2004.

Shank, who fortunately chose softball over golf for his "spare time," said operating the hot line "takes a lot. You must be aware of things going on around you. You have to know the weather conditions and a lot of times I've driven over to check them out. It's not far, about a mile and a half, to the complex."

Shank's predecessor, Fred Rainey, was the first hot-line operator from his home near Tahoe Park, where the club played in 1993 when the first line was installed. Initially, there was only one line, which made it difficult to get through when there was a late cancellation. After Fred passed away, the club put in a virtual answering machine with several connections to take calls at once.

George Hodsdon said he used to call Shank at 7 a.m. to cancel games at the Howe Avenue park on Mondays and get the word out to players, some of whom drive more than an hour to play ball. "Don was always ready and willing to take my calls at any time." Before learning that Trudy was stepping up, Hodsdon said, "Finding a replacement is going to be tough, unless we get lucky." (See next Page)

*SMARTT WILL BE NEW HOTLINE VOICE -- From Page 2)*

As luck would have it, Trudy Smartt agreed to take the job, and planned to start as soon as she can get schooled on the system and have the necessary telephone service arranged by the club.

Shank somehow found time to operate the hot line while maintaining a busy schedule as a player and an umpire. He umpires L-1 on Mondays. He umpires two nights a week in Roseville. He has umpired for 25 years and is a member of the ASA Umpire Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. He has umpired five national championship tournaments, and became eligible for "The Indicator Fraternity" once he had done three nationals. He has done kids 18 and under, the 40 and over national championships in Sacramento, and the All-USA Army, Navy and Marine Corps championships.

He also plays on Tuesdays (L-2 and L-6) and for Al Tirapelli's Falcons on Thursdays (Sierra Valley League). He plays in a Carmichael double-header league on Wednesdays. He pitches for the Ain't No Saints 60s tournament team on many weekends. Few pitchers work as quickly as Don. "No one ever accused him of killing the grass," said one veteran Golden Senior. "Batters need to be on their toes."

The former Marine infantryman personalized the GSSCS hotline with "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" and other downloaded songs, including "Rain Drops Keep Falling on My Head," which no one wants to hear.

Now 68, Don joined the Golden Seniors about six years ago. If you see him around the ball fields, which is quite likely sooner or later, give him a thank you for all he's done for the club. #

## **LEAGUE HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Wet Weather Disrupts Early Schedules**

*March and April showers made fields unplayable in a number of cases, wiping out practice games and impacting the start of the season, particularly for League One, which had scheduled its regular season to begin earlier than the other five leagues so as to accommodate nine teams.*

*From Henry Low, L-1 Commissioner:*

**FINALLY -- PLAY BALL!!!** The Monday Day League (L-1), originally scheduled to start on March 19, got going on April 9 after three successive weeks of rainouts. This was very similar to last season, when we had four early season rainouts. However, with the efforts of George Hodsdon, L-1 assistant commissioner, we were able to rework the schedule and include two makeup games at the end of our season.

Three of the four games this first week were very competitive, but the fourth game was pretty lopsided. When the manager of the losing team was asked about the 10-1 score, he simply replied, "We didn't lose; we just ran out of innings."

We were doing a trial with a "V" directing runners away from the bag at second base. Unfortunately, the "V" was not placed correctly on the field, which led to a delay getting started and some confusion during the games. This is pretty typical, when you try something new. So next week we will get it set up correctly and try again.

Personally, I have had three rainouts and a bye this first week, so my playing season has yet to begin. With nine teams, the L-1 schedule has a bye for one team each week.  
# (See next page)

*From Dave Vargo, L-2 Commissioner:*

**TRIPLE PLAY IN SEASON OPENER.** On April 3, VFW Post 67 had runners on first and second and none out, when batter Dan Tajbl flied out to Dave Vargo in right-centerfield. “I rifled a throw to Ron Smith at third to get the runner by 10-15 feet and Ron alertly threw to second (Joe DiSessa) to complete a triple play on the runner who tagged and tried to advance from first.” Accurate throws, for sure, but as one observer (Myron Dahl) noted, some “boneheaded base-running” made the triple play possible.

In his second season back from knee replacement surgeries, Vargo has gotten off to a sizzling start: Ten hits for his first 11 at-bats total in L-2, L-6 and L-3 on April 3, with the one out a well-struck ball to right-center in L-3.

**And There It Goes!** In L-2 action on April 10, Dave Avery -- though still hindered by sore Achilles’ tendons -- hammered a long fly just foul over the fence for Sport Leisure Travel, but then kept another drive fair for his first over-the-fence clout of the season. He had two all of last year.

**Base-Running Rule Stays the Same.** The Board of Directors had been ready to adopt a new rule so that running from third to first within the “triangle” would no longer be an automatic out. Just don’t count the run, the board had voted. Well, there was strong dissent from chief umpire Tom Bussey, so the board reconsidered at the 11th hour and decided to keep the rule as it has been -- the runner is OUT and no run scores for any infringement of the zone, even if there is no play at home! The only change from last season is that the taboo triangle starts at the commit line, not at third base, and runs to a point eight feet wide of home plate. Naturally, a player was called out for running inside the line in the first game of the season in L-2, even though there was no play at home and the runner never got anywhere near the catcher. Folks on the field had to acknowledge that “a rule is a rule.” #

## **SAFETY REPORT: CLUB NEEDS COORDINATOR**

Interested in leading the club’s efforts to promote and maintain the safest environment possible for our players? Contact Club President Tom Sansone or any member of the Board of Directors (see contact information elsewhere in this newsletter). Curtis Holcomb, who had been safety coordinator, is now serving as club commissioner. We need a full-time safety coordinator!!!

**STRETCH AND WARM UP BEFORE PRACTICE OR GAMES.** It happens all the time at the start of a season... a player coming out for his first game, possibly his first game in a number of years, hits a ball on the ground and runs hard, only to strain or pull a muscle that will take him weeks or months to heal. A tear and he’s likely out for the year. The message: Arrive early, stretch those muscles. And try to exercise and stretch every day, not just on days you’re playing softball.

Players also need to inform their managers if they they can’t run as well as they expect, so the manager can try to arrange for a substitute runner and put the player in a defensive position that is less likely to aggravate the sore muscle. #

# SUNSHINE AND HEALTH REPORT

Condolences to **Nancy Diehl** on the recent passing of her mother.

**Darrel McRorie**, sidelined last year by a heart attack, is back in action, displaying his steady bat and glove work on Tuesday mornings.

## SHORT HOPS & LONG BOUNCES

**RIVER CATS TICKETS FOR 2012.** Entertainment Chairman Lou Coppola reports that his RiverCats tickets for Saturdays and Sundays are available for anyone who wants to buy them (saving \$4 per ticket) during the course of the season. He said they are “very exchangeable” for any date or game of the year in the same Section 109, Rows 15-30. Call Lou (444-6138) for details. #

**SONOMA WINE COUNTRY SENIOR GAMES.** President Sansone passes along info on the Sonoma Wine Country Senior Games softball tournament the first week of June. Teams interested in participating (\$280) should contact Theresa Strickland at 707 483-1956 or email [trstrick@comcast.net](mailto:trstrick@comcast.net). Entry deadline is May 4. Three 40+ players allowed on each team. #

**NEXT DUGOUT CHATTER: MAY 2012.** READ THE DUGOUT CHATTER ONLINE AT [WWW.GSSCS.ORG](http://WWW.GSSCS.ORG) WHERE NEWS UPDATES AND PHOTOS ARE PUBLISHED AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T ALREADY DONE SO, YOU CAN REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM THE DUGOUT CHATTER MAILING LIST AND READ THE NEWSLETTER ONLINE, SAVING THE CLUB POSTAGE, PAPER AND INK. TO GET OFF THE SNAIL-MAIL LIST, CALL HENRY LOW AT 391-3938. MARCH-THRU-AUGUST ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER ARE GENERALLY AVAILABLE ONLINE WITH SOME PRINTED COPIES AVAILABLE AT FIELDS (SEE SCOREKEEPERS). THE ONLINE EDITION IS USUALLY ACCESSIBLE DAYS BEFORE THE PRINTED EDITION ARRIVES VIA U.S. MAIL. THE ONLINE EDITION ALSO MAY CONTAIN MORE INFORMATION AND PHOTOS. ADVERTISING: CLUB SPONSORS MAY RUN ADS IN THE DUGOUT CHATTER (\$50 FOR QUARTER-PAGE OR LESS, \$75 FOR A HALF-PAGE. NON-SPONSOR RATES ARE HIGHER.) CONTACT LOU COPPOLA, 444-6138. #

## “HOTLINE” SOURCE FOR NEWS, INFORMATION

The club's hotline provides recorded information for members, such as the general meeting schedule. It also is where players can call to make sure their games are going to be played as scheduled due to threatening weather or other events that make the fields unplayable, such as water main breaks or thefts of copper wire that prevents use of lights for night games. These things have happened, so even if the weather looks balmy, and you can't be reached by your manager, you might be advised to give the “hot line” a jingle at 491-1721. #

## DUGOUT CHATTER ON LINE AND AT FIELDS

With this March issue, the Dugout Chatter is available for players to pick up at the fields where they play. Check the scorekeeper's desk for a copy. Better yet, read the Dugout Chatter online at [www.gsscs.org](http://www.gsscs.org). From March through August, the Chatter is mailed to a restricted list of sponsors, non-playing life members, and players on injured reserve. To hold down our newsletter costs, particularly postage, the newsletter is mailed to the membership during the months when there are no games, which is normally October through February. Members may inform Assistant Secretary Henry Low (391-3938) to request that they be taken off the mailing list year-round. #

# **SPONSORS SIGNED UP AND PAID FOR 2012**

First VP Dick Latimer lists these club sponsors as paid up for 2012, and urges club members to reward their support by giving them business:

**American Medequip (Sponsoring 2 teams, the second in memory of Alicia's father)**

**Arnold Properties**

**Avalon Hearing Aid Centers Inc.**

**In Memory of the Becks**

**Bertolucci's Body & Fender Shop**

**Better Softball Equipment**

**C&C Plumbing & Electrical**

**Cottonwood Estates**

**East Lawn**

**Espanol Italian Restaurant (Sponsoring 2 teams)**

**Executive Limousine**

**Geremia Pools**

**Greater Sacramento Softball Association (GSSA)**

**Harper Properties**

**In Memory of Jerry Jodice**

**Jolly Rogers**

**LASEREYES.COM**

**L & S Surveys**

**Livingston's Concrete Service**

**Merrill Bookkeeping Income Tax**

**Miller's Munchies**

**R.H. Nielsen Real Estate/Appraisal**

**NorCal Jackets**

**Old Hornets**

**Overhead Door Company of Sacramento Inc.**

**Rabbit Inc.**

**Reinwald's Health & Dental Insurance Plans Brokerage**

**Show Biz Productions**

**Silver Cats**

**Sports Leisure Vacations**

**STORYHAT**

**Tanner and Associates**

**VFW Post 67**

**Mark E. White DDS**

**Wion's Body Shop**

**Richard H. Will, Attorney**

Anyone who knows of a potential sponsor can help recruitment. The fee is \$300 for the first year, when uniform jerseys are prepared, and \$250 per year thereafter. For more information, contact Dick Latimer at 363-9555. #

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS -- 2011-12**

President **Tom Sansone** ... 686-1654

First Vice President **Dick Latimer**

363-9555 (Responsible for team sponsorships.)

Second Vice President **Pete Ward** ...

989-4722 (Responsible for team uniforms.)

Treasurer **Don Wall** ... 434-8308

Secretary **Matt Tedrow** ... 515-0451

Player Agent **Linda McCollum-Greene** ... 391-5559 (Responsible for player applications, player substitutes, waiting lists.)

Club Commissioner **Curtis**

**Holcomb** ...600-6065 (Responsible for enforcement of playing rules, oversees league commissioners.)

## **TELEPHONE HOTLINE**

### **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:** Linda  
McCollum-Greene 391-5559

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

### **GSSC #3912 Blood Bank:**

456-1500

**Safety:** Coordinator  
appointment pending

**Entertainment:** Lou Coppola  
444-6138

**Dugout Chatter:** Ron Roach,  
editor 422-2500

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

**Planning:** Merritt Davis,  
393-7160