

# NSS Board Minutes

## January 14, 2014

**Board Members in attendance:**

Ron Kunert	X	Dennis Steinhauser	X
Ron Hager	X	Duke Burgess (via remote connection)	X
Mert Opfer	X	Ron Franck	X
Chuck Grubb	X	Greg West	X
Roberta Steinhauser			

**Approval of December 10, 2013 Minutes:** Ron Hager made the motion, with Greg West seconding, to approve the December 2013 Board minutes. All members present approved.

**Old Business:**

1. Rules Tested in the 2013 Fall Season. (Duke Burgess)
  - a. 5-Run per inning: Duke felt there was no negative feedback from the fall test and suggested we continue using this for the coming season. Discussion followed. Mert motioned we use 5-runs maximum per inning except for the last inning of regular play where a team may score 10 runs or, if trailing, may go 10 runs over their opponent. Those in favor: Mert, Chuck, Dennis, Duke, Ron F., and Greg; Opposed: Ron Hager
  - b. Flip-Flop: Wasn't used this past fall, except maybe one time. The 15-run differential was too great to allow us to really test it. If we're going to use this rule, we need to lower the run differential. Dennis objected only because he felt it caused the Home team to become the Visitor in the final inning. Ron Hager and Ron Franck suggested we wait until the fall and try it again. Decided to test again in the fall.
  - c. Extend Game time: Dennis suggested we extend game times to 55 minutes, instead of 50, but keep start times the same. Dennis motioned and Ron Hager seconded to schedule games for 55 minutes, after which the umpire will advise managers that time is up, finish this inning plus one more. Games to start at 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 and 9:00 pm. Those in favor: Unanimous.
  - d. Pool Players: The rule to allow pool players to be assigned only in the event a team had less than 10 players in the lineup was discussed. Mert motioned and Ron Franck seconded that pool players only be placed on a team if the team has less than 10 players in the lineup. Those in favor: Unanimous.
2. Status of committee to discuss nightly draft process. (Greg West): Greg West stated he had contacted the following people to become committee members: Ron Franck, Roger Hein, George Scott, Ed Tworek, Paul Kwaak, Duke Burgess, and Greg West. A meeting will be scheduled for later this month.
3. Status of shed construction. (Ron Franck): Ron briefed that walls and doors are done, working on roof. Ron has check available to pay incidentals up to this point, approximately \$800. Ron indicated that Jim Price or Colin Anderson might have access to shingles. Gil Stevens may have access to paint.

4. Status of uniforms. (Ron Franck): Al Pfeffer will need 10 days to get the shirts in and then printed. Hats can be ordered as soon as we know how many teams are needed and what team names we are going to use. The idea is to get hats out right away, even if jerseys are not available. Ron will check with Al concerning quality of jerseys and color per team.
5. Status of league survey. (Chuck Grubb) Chuck has been distracted with work and holiday events. He has some suggestions from other players and will start working on this soon. Chuck asked for additional suggestions/questions be submitted this week and will have a draft survey ready by next Tuesday, Jan 21.
6. Status of La Vista proposal for additional field. (Ron Kunert): LaVista sent an email to Ron, who forwarded to all board members, stating there will be no contract. The Board decided not to rent the 3<sup>rd</sup> field until we increase the number of teams above 16.
7. Follow-up with Bill Bowes for Heart Defibrillator Training in April (Ron Kunert): Ron contacted Bill. He will be more than happy to provide the training and suggested we do it at the firehouse. Ron and Bill will work on available dates.

#### **New Business:**

1. Registration preparations for online registration form posting 2/1/14 (Chuck Grubb): Chuck has the 2014 web form built and will send to board members for review. Get suggested changes back to Chuck quickly. The Board decided not to allow Express registration this season since we are conducting a full draft and need to ensure everyone provided complete and accurate information. Since this will be a full league draft year and require the purchase of new jerseys the cost for registration will be \$95 for everyone.
2. Fall Season Umpires by NSS League. (Dennis Steinhauser): Dennis suggested we consider not having paid umpires this next fall. Discussion followed. Will continue this discussion monthly.
3. Spring Season Umpires: Chuck suggested we establish a list of those umpires who may be interested in working games for the 2014 season. From that list we will decide who will be the Umpire in Chief. Greg will contact previous umpires to see who's interested.
4. Testing of Bats. (Ron Kunert): Ron stated that it had come to his attention that some players are using illegal bats. This becomes a safety issue and needs to be stopped. It was suggested we look at purchasing or renting a bat compression tester. Ron will look into this idea. Discussion included penalties for use of illegal bats. Those penalties are already written into our Playing Rules and Guidelines document. Discussion to be continued.
5. Other

#### **Board Reports:**

- Commissioner – Ron Kunert. Ron questioned why NSS paid the league insurance for the Friday league. Ron will contact Dave Banghart to resolve issue.
- Associate Commissioner – Ron Hager. Nothing
- Field Scheduling – Dennis Steinhauser. Wanted to reiterate the 55 minute, versus 50 minute game time. Dennis wanted to know if there were any objections to sharing our Playing Rules and Guidelines with Lincoln Parks and Rec. He's trying to encourage them to start their own senior softball league. No objections.

- Finance & Registration – Mert Opfer. Dates have been set up for registration. Chuck working on form.
- Marketing, Publicity & Communications – Chuck Grubb. Suggested we get our own phone line for Rain Outs, etc. Communications will start flowing shortly regarding registration. Winter socials started last night at La Vista Keno. Expect to renew all corporate sponsorships for those who contributed last year. Solicited ideas for more social events. Thinking of having a social soon after the draft to meet and greet new teammates.
- Player Personnel – Duke Burgess. Need to get out the word for new team managers. We will have several vacancies and want to get started on this now. An inquiry about tournament team play was received and board members were reminded to refer these requests to tournament team managers.
- Purchasing & Inventory – Ron Franck. Will check with La Vista Parks to see about putting sponsor logos on the new shed or fences. Also looking to get some type backing to put on the strike zone mat to prevent them from slipping. Need to get lines on batter's boxes repainted again.
- Rules & Umpires – Greg West. Nothing additional.

Comments from Members at Large:

Ed Tworek – Ed submitted a list of issues that he feels have reduced the playing time for individuals. We appreciated the document and will review it over the coming month and discuss at the next meeting. See attached.

Motion to adjourn from Ron Franck, seconded by Greg West. Those in favor: Unanimous.

**Next meeting:**

February 18, 2014. Location: Pizza West. Meeting Time: 6:30 p.m.

## 2014 Calendar

Activity	2014	Board Member Follow-up
League Survey	1/1/14 – 1/15/14	Ron K. will follow-up with Chuck.
Registration-Summer League	2/1/14 – 4/10/14 (returning players) 2/1/14 – 4/15/14 (new players)	
New Player/Draft League Practices	4/9, 4/14, 4/16, 4/21	
Draft Night	4/22	
League Scrimmage Games	4/23	
Heart Defibrillator Training		Ron K will contact Bill Bowes to confirm his availability to provide this training.
Summer League Play Dates	4/28 – 7/16 (23 play dates)	(5/26 is a holiday)
Summer League Playoff	7/21	
Tournament Games	7/23 – 8/11	
Registration-Fall League	7/1 – 8/10	
Pre-season Practice	8/13, 8/18	
Draft	8/19	
Fall League Play Dates	8/20	

**Document submitted by Ed Tworek for review by board.**

12/28/2013

MEMO: Reduction of playing time

I would like to express a concern I had this past year with several rules changes that had the cumulative effect of decreasing playing time for Nebraska Senior Softball players. As we prepare to move into the 2014 season, I suggest the league review each of the following policies/rules enacted the past year or two:

1. One hour game intervals with :50 game clock. In a recent Spring schedule, we scheduled four games per night starting at 6,7,8 and 9 p.m.

Many games ended after 6 innings. Some after 5 innings. Note: In a 5 inning game, the home team will bat in only 4 innings if they have the lead. Some players from Lincoln/Wahoo/Fremont/Sioux City, etc spend more time driving than playing ball.

*Recommendation: That 1-hour scheduling never be used in senior softball.*

2. Tied games are limited to one extra inning. This increases the chances of ending in a tie game, and this will be a disappointment to both teams.

*Recommendation: Restore max of two extra innings.*

3. Flip Flop Rule. Though not common, this has the effect of denying the visiting team an entire inning of at-bats.

*Recommendation: Remove present flip-flop rule.*

4. Game clock starting after meeting with ump. This early start of the game clock sometimes occurs before the home team has time to take the field to start the game, burning additional game time during first inning warm-up pitches.

*Recommendation: Game clock starts when up ump declares "play ball", which should occur just prior to first at-bat.*

5. Reducing maximum runs to 5 per inning. Previously the rule was 5 runs or 5 up, whichever is greater. This rule change alone affected a great number of games this past season, reducing production and reducing average team at-bats.

*Recommendation: Restore the previous rule.*

Note: The league has operated just fine for some 12 years prior to the above 5 rule changes which have collectively reduced our game experience.

While I would hope that the above practices be avoided in the future, my bigger concern is adding still additional game-shortening measures which occasionally are suggested:

1. Mercy Rule (e.g. 15 after 5; 20 after 4). While this is common in some non-senior leagues, it is not normal in senior softball due to the run limit per inning.

2. Reducing the minimum innings defensively from 4 to 3. Some managers don't comply with the existing requirement to play everyone at least 4 innings defensively each game. Their solution is to reduce the minimum to 3. I think this would have the effect of further eroding the game experience for the players at the end of the lineup. Someone needs to stand up for them and protect their playing time.

3. Any rule that increases the likelihood of a forfeit. Changes to our substitute player rules, currently under review should never include any rule that increases forfeits. Forfeits are the height of disservice to the loyal players who show up and can't play.

Bottom line--It's important to understand the difference between "speeding up" the game and "shortening" the game. Speeding up the game should be our objective, but shortening it (taking away at-bats) should not.

Ed Tworek