

## INTRODUCTION

The Harris County Senior Softball League (HCSSL – the League) is open to men and women who are age 50 or older during the playing year. The purpose of the League is to promote recreational softball and related social activities for its members.

The League's "softball playing" goal is two-fold. The first goal is to have competitive divisions and teams, without sacrificing fair play, good sportsmanship, and the opportunity for all timely registrants to play. The second goal is to have and maintain the playing fields and facilities in the very best condition possible.

For years, the League successfully operated with two primary internal documents – the Constitution and Rules. But many decisions by the Board of Directors and the way the League does business do not directly impact or fit into either of these two documents and were only documented in prior Board meeting minutes.

For guidance and reference purposes, the need to bring all the Board policies and guidelines into one document is apparent. This document, coupled with subsequent reviews and updates by future Boards, addresses this need. This latest document is amended as of January 2021.

### 1. **PLAY**

#### **A. General**

The dates of the summer season's schedule and related functions (registration deadline, tryouts, drafts, etc.) are to be set by the Board during the final two Board meetings of the previous calendar year. These dates are to be finalized and published no later than the January Board meeting. The summer season's registration form is to be included on the League's website and will also be emailed to all members. A paper version will be sent to those without email.

The dates of the winter season's schedule and related functions (registration deadline, team formation, etc.) dates are to be set by the Board. These dates are to be finalized and published no later than the July Board meeting and updates will be posted to the HCSSL website calendar. The winter season's registration form is to be included in the League's July and September newsletters website and will also be emailed to all members.

The final planned first summer tryout date and the summer registration cutoff date shall be concurrent. This date shall be at least two weeks prior to the start of HCSSL's summer draft. Registrations from returning players received after the registration cutoff date will be subject to a \$50 late fee. If the planned tryout date is rained out, it will be rescheduled as appropriate in the judgement of the Board.

#### **B. Registration**

Returning players (defined as those who played last summer or winter season) and new players (defined as those who never played, or did not play the previous summer or winter season) that have signed up by the summer season registration deadline will be eligible for the draft. New players, however, must also have attended a tryout session to be draft eligible.

The League will continue to accept late registrations after season play has commenced. For the summer, such registrations are subject to a \$50 late fee from returning players, rather than new players; for the late fee, "returning player" means anyone who has previously played in HCSSL, not just a player who played during the past year and is exempt from new-player tryouts. The League will not accept late player registrations for either the summer or winter seasons after the end of the first half of their respective seasons.

Players who have paid the correct registration fee but have submitted unsigned registration forms are to be placed in the draft but will not be eligible to participate in any League games or practices until they complete a signed registration form. Any games they participate in will be declared a forfeit for their team. Team managers are to be informed at the draft of all players who have not submitted signed registration forms.

Players requesting preferences for playing in specific divisions, or for not playing on certain nights, must provide specific justification on their registration forms. Registration forms will provide appropriate spaces for these requests. Team and player assignments must be made in the best overall interests of the League. To the extent individual preferences can be handled within that context, they will be considered. However, if such requests are deemed inconsistent with the best interests of the League, they will not be considered.

Any "personal" notes added by a registrant on their registration form regarding other players who they will not play for, or not play with, will be ignored.

A player's registration fee may be refunded if his/her written request is received by a Board Member at least two days before the start of HCSSL's draft. Otherwise, only a special circumstance will warrant a return of the fee. Such a special circumstance would require a Board of Director's approval.

#### **C. Manager Assignment**

Players wishing to serve as a summer season team manager are encouraged to make their availability known to the Board prior to the February Board meeting. The manager appointments will be made by the Board at that meeting or at a subsequent Board meeting later that month.

While it is preferred that members of the Board of Directors not serve as managers, only the President and Vice-President are prohibited from serving as managers during their term.

In general, it is recommended that a manager serve no more than three consecutive summer seasons.

Players in the bottom 10% of the prior year player evaluations should generally not be considered for manager selection in that division for the following summer season.

If a manager replacement is needed during the season, the Division Coordinator will solicit candidates from the team and that team's simple majority vote will determine the replacement.

#### **D. Tryouts**

Tryouts will be scheduled for the purpose of evaluating new players. All new players (as defined in Section 1. Play – B. (Registration)) must attend a scheduled tryout session to be eligible for the draft. For summer tryouts, there are two scheduled tryout dates to allow both for scheduling conflicts and the potential for rain on one day.

The Vice President may cancel the second tryout session if it is not needed. New players who miss the tryouts will be rated and assigned as outlined in Section 1. Play – H. (Player Placement After the Draft).

#### **E. Summer Season Set-Up**

All teams are redrafted each year by the selected managers for the summer season. HCSSL's expectation is that the League will do its best to accommodate all applicants who register on time before the beginning of the season.

The minimum goal is to field 4 divisions of 6 teams, with each team having 12 players assigned to it, except the National division, which should have 13 players. The actual number of teams per division and players per team will be decided by a majority vote of the Board 2 to 3 days prior to the start of the first (United Division) draft session. This Board decision is typically handled immediately following the final tryout session. The number of teams and players per team are determined by the number of players registered at that time.

If a returning or new player's registration and fee payment are received by the registration deadline, that player will be drafted and assigned to a team for play provided, however that a new player must attend a tryout session prior to the draft to be eligible to be drafted.

Returning players whose registrations are received after the registration deadline, but before the beginning of the first (United) draft, will be included in the draft. All the pending draft's division managers must be promptly informed of the approved draft-eligible player(s).

If a player is not approved as draft eligible, then the team assignment will be made as outlined in *Section 1. Play – H. Player Placement After The Draft*.

**F. Summer Season Draft**

The draft will occur on periodic days — typically two days apart, to allow a day to communicate the results of each division's draft to the managers of the subsequent division prior to their draft — beginning with the United Division, followed by the American Division, then the Continental Division, and finally the National Division. The "start" of HCSSL's summer draft is defined as the moment when the first player is drafted in the United Division.

The Vice-President is responsible for conducting the draft. The Secretary and two additional Board members, selected by the Vice-President and approved by the Board, will assist the Vice-President in the draft sessions. These four Board members — the Draft Committee — will resolve any disputed issues that arise during a draft session. The Vice-President will preside over all draft sessions except as noted below. No member of the Draft Committee may preside over the draft session in which he is expected to be picked and may not vote to resolve any disputes during that session. A member of the Draft Committee who is also a manager will not act as a member of the Committee during the draft for his division. If any member of the Draft Committee is unable to attend a particular draft session, the Vice-President may appoint another Board member to replace the absent member or choose to proceed with just the remaining members of the Committee present. If a non-Board-member has been appointed to assist the Secretary, he/she will be asked to attend all draft sessions. Board members present at the drafts may not make any player-related comments except for data regarding players' availability.

All player evaluations from the previous summer and winter season shall be provided to all team managers in advance of their respective drafts.

During their division's draft, division managers will select a Division Coordinator for their division. Prior to draft day, division managers should prepare a list of suitable candidates who are willing to be a Division Coordinator. At their draft sessions, managers will also decide how to handle all division-option rules, such as whether to use a 1/1 or 0/0 starting ball/strike count on each batter, whether to use "one-pitch" in final "buffet" innings, etc.

Prior to their division's draft, managers will draw lots to determine the order of their division's draft. Managers may exchange their position in the draft order immediately prior to the draft beginning but may not change the draft order once the draft has started.

Only the four assigned Board members, the managers of the drafting division, and the managers of the following division shall be present during the draft. All other League members who may be present will be required to leave.

Managers must conduct their draft without assistance. A manager who is unable to attend the draft session, for whatever reason, may designate a player or a manager by proxy to make selections on his behalf. In this particular instance, the manager may be in contact with the person substituting for him at the draft by telephone or computer. Managers may bring their own computers in order to assist them in making their selections, but they may not be connected to any other third party.

Player selection during the draft will be determined in the first round by the managers' drawing of lots as described above. Thereafter, the position of the person drawing will vary pursuant to a diagram drawn up by the Board for the placement of selections after the first round. This type of draft is commonly referred to as a "snake" and avoids the problem of one person having the best position in the draft based upon the initial drawing. At some point during the draft, based on the manager's evaluation from the prior summer, each manager must select himself on his team where his/her evaluation ranking placed him/her (i.e. – the round of the draft where he/she was ranked).

Traditionally, a manager has been allowed to draft only one player that is a sponsor or represents a sponsor. Now, while that information is made available and managers are encouraged to follow that practice when possible, this is no longer a requirement. Managers are allowed to draft players based on their assessment of player skills and team needs even if it occasionally means ending up with more than one sponsor-associated player on a team.

Managers must make their draft selections in a reasonable time. The Vice-President, or his assigned replacement, will determine when a reasonable amount of time has passed. If the manager fails to make a selection during this time period, the presiding officer of the draft may pass onto the next manager and give the offending manager a replacement player from the end of the draft.

Team managers make their own assessments of player skills and abilities, which positions they play best, and so forth. However, team managers are required to share openly and honestly with their counterparts, both before and during the draft, any information they may have regarding player availability (i.e. physical injuries, disabilities, relocation plans, and conflicting obligations) that would prevent a player from playing full-time. No player availability information should be withheld from other managers.

At the completion of the draft, and prior to leaving the drafting room, team managers may make trades among themselves. No trades may be made subsequent to this — team rosters stand as drafted and further trades are not allowed, however, the Draft Committee may allow changes to the roster of a Division if they determine that such changes are in the best interest of the League and have the agreement of a majority of the managers and the Coordinator of that Division. Such changes must be proposed within 24 hours of the conclusion of the Division's draft and approval of the Draft Committee and managers and Division Coordinator must be obtained prior to the start of the following draft or within 48 hours if the change is proposed in the final draft. Additionally, the Board may move a player to another Division at any time after the draft if it is shown that a player is playing in a Division so above or below his/her skill level that he/she is a danger to themselves or others.

A final copy of the coming season's rules is to be made available to all selected managers during their draft session.

After the completion of the draft, Division Coordinators are to be provided with a roster of the players in their division that indicates in which quadrant each player was selected.

**G. Permanent Substitutes**

Player applications for "permanent substitute" status will not be accepted.

**H. Player Placement After The Draft**

All players, either new or returning, not placed on teams during the summer draft or the team assembly process for the winter, will be assigned to a division and team based on the following considerations:

- Available opportunities to place additional players
- Perceived ability of the player to be assigned
- Maintaining competitive balance of teams within the division.
- Recognition of identified needs of teams within the division.

Most of the time, additional players are welcome and can be placed on teams reasonably promptly even after the season begins. However, if all teams – especially those in the division in which the player would likely be placed – have full rosters, typically 12 per team (13 per team in National), and placing additional players would limit playing opportunities for players already on teams, prospective late sign-ups may be effectively discouraged from registering for the season already underway by advising them that prospects for getting placed on a team are limited, encouraging them instead to register for the subsequent season, and assuring them that anyone registering prior to team formation for that next season will definitely be placed on a team. A player in this situation who nonetheless elects to register for the ongoing season may do so but accepts the risk that he may be able to play only as a non-priority pickup player for most or all the season.

As stated in HCSSL Rule 3.1.B.1, all players not assigned to a team during the Summer season draft or the Winter season team assembly process are to be evaluated over a tryout period in a division determined by the Vice President and at least one Division Coordinator. If it is determined by the division managers and the Division Coordinator that the player would be better suited to play in another division, that player may be reassigned to another division for new tryout period.

During a player's tryout period he is evaluated in comparison with other players in the same division. At the completion of his tryout period, he is assigned a quadrant (or quartile) ranking, reflecting the best judgment of the division managers and Division Coordinator where they believe he would be drafted. The quadrant/quartile ranking would reflect where, in their judgment, the player would be drafted. The first quadrant would reflect his being drafted in the top 25% of the players in the division, the second quadrant would reflect the next 25%, etc.

A late registering returning player may be given a quadrant ranking based on his evaluation from the previous summer season. However, if there is some uncertainty as to a returning player's ability to play at his last summer's level (e.g. someone returning from serious illness/injury) that player may be given an updated quadrant ranking as a result of his tryout period.

Assignment to a team within the division will be made by a consensus of the division managers and the Division Coordinator based on their evaluation of the considerations mentioned above and a vote of the managers if necessary. The division coordinator will vote

to break a tie vote of the managers. Once a consensus has been reached, a manager does not have the right to refuse the assignment of a player to his team. Assignment to a team can be either (1) to fill "permanent opening" on a team roster, or (2) as an addition to an existing roster. Note that it is very important that everyone understands which of these two types of placement it is.

1. A permanent opening occurs when a player formerly on a team roster is not expected to play again in the current season, typically due to serious illness/injury, relocation, failure to attend games, or resignation. The player concerned is required to submit to his manager a written communication, either a letter or email notice, stating that he does not expect to play again during the current season. It is then the manager's responsibility to notify the division coordinator that a permanent opening has occurred.

When possible, a permanent opening should be filled by a player of a comparable quadrant ranking to that of the player no longer on the roster in order to maintain competitive balance among teams in the division.

In practice, factors other than matching the quadrant of a new player to that of a permanent open position may influence how best to fill the open position at a given point in time. The intent is to use quadrant matching as a guideline, but to allow each division's Coordinator and managers to place players in what they consider a fair and reasonable manner, balancing the goals of getting players placed on teams in timely fashion while not unduly disrupting the competitive balance of the teams in the division.

A player who fills a permanent opening replaces the former player on the roster. If a player whose departure created a permanent opening, and who has since been replaced by another player, later wishes and is able to return to play during that same season, he is not automatically returned to his original team. The division managers and Division coordinator will determine his placement as they would any other post-draft player, following the considerations listed in the beginning of this section

2 A player may also be assigned to a team as an addition to its existing roster when the division managers and Division Coordinator determine for any reason it would be appropriate to do so. Such situations might include a team frequently short-handed, perhaps due to short-term illness or injury to several players; a team losing nearly all of its games, which would clearly become more competitive with the addition of a good player; or multiple players becoming available for placement at the same time, such that assigning them to appropriate teams would best maintain competitive balance in the division.

When assigned to a team as an addition to the existing roster, a newly assigned player does not replace anyone on the roster.

Whenever a player registers after either the summer or winter draft, the Treasurer is to notify all members of the Board, as well as all other necessary individuals, after the following three benchmarks have been met:

1. Receipt of properly completed registration form and correct fee payment.
2. Assignment or reassignment to a Division for the player's tryout period.
3. Assignment to a team.

The above information is to be furnished as promptly as possible to the Board.

#### **I. Player Evaluation Process**

The player evaluation process is performed late in each playing season (for example, during August of the summer league) for the purpose of evaluating each player's

performance during that season. The evaluation results are used for the following purposes:

- To provide a guide for the managers during the following year's summer draft.
- To be used as a guide for the make-up of teams for the winter season.
- To determine in which round summer managers must select themselves.

### **1. Evaluation of summer season players**

Summer evaluations are to be performed, individually, by team managers and up to ten other evaluators as selected by the Vice President. Within a month of the start of the summer season, each manager and division coordinator are to be furnished a roster of the players in his division. Division coordinators are to ensure that all managers have been notified of players assigned within their division after this initial roster has been furnished.

The evaluators are allowed to use their own criteria in the relative ranking of the division's players. If uncertain on how to incorporate things like dependability and attitude, along with skills such as hitting, defense, and speed, a rule of thumb would be to show players in the order you would draft them based on the current season's experience. In addition to performing the evaluations independently, the only official instructions are:

- Rank players in your division based only on their play this season.
- Each manager, in his opinion, is to rank the best player in the division as number one, followed by the second best, etc.
- Do not rank yourself.
- Submit these evaluations to the Vice President no later than the last week of August.
- With the importance of the final rankings, it is very important that all evaluations be developed carefully and submitted on time.

Note that the evaluations are confidential, and all parties must treat them as such.

The Vice President is to contact any evaluator who has not submitted his player evaluations as of the end of August.

The Vice President will, with the assistance of a qualified league member, summarize these evaluations, and forward the summary (i.e. an average composite ranking) to each manager and division coordinator. The rankings are to be placed on a spreadsheet where an overall collective ranking is mathematically determined and then sorted to show all players in the division from best to worst. The individual evaluation lists are confidential and should only be viewed by the Vice President and only those parties that he/she deems necessary.

This should be done as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the second week of September.

The first 12 players listed in each division shall become ineligible for the playoffs (known as listed players).

The final overall division player rankings are confidential, and all parties must treat them as such.

The division coordinators are responsible for posting, at their respective fields, the roster of players who are ineligible to be pick-up players for the playoff games. These rosters are to be posted with the names in alphabetical order, not in rank order.

## **2. Evaluation of winter players**

An evaluation of all winter players will not be done.

Those winter players who are new to the League and those returning players who did not play during the preceding summer season will be evaluated, as well as players who played in a winter division different than the one they played in during the summer.

The Treasurer is responsible for notifying the appropriate managers of those winter season players who should be evaluated. This should be done after the players are placed in a division and near the end of the winter league.

The evaluations will be done by the winter league managers and any other evaluators chosen by the Vice President. The evaluation will be to note the appropriate division and quadrant in which the player should be placed for the following summer draft. Each evaluator should do his evaluation independently.

Each evaluation should be forwarded to the Vice President no later than three weeks prior to the end of the regular winter season games. The Vice President, with assistance of a qualified league member will summarize these evaluations and forward the results to each division coordinator. These results will be made available to the managers of the next summer season.

The final evaluation consensus is confidential, and all parties must treat it as such. The Vice President will determine who is to be provided with the evaluation consensus.

### **J. Winter Season Division and Team Make-Up**

Each winter season, the target is to field four divisions with four teams each having a minimum of 11 players assigned to each team.

The actual number of winter season divisions, teams and players assigned will be determined by the Board. These numbers and make-up are determined by the timeliness of the registrations received, the total number of players that register and by the parity or disparity of the past "summer season" divisions of the players who have registered. Additionally, HCSSL may provide for a day league composed of players age 70 years and up.

The President and Vice-President are responsible for making up the teams, with the assistance of the division coordinator and such other persons who are asked by the President and Vice President. The evaluation ranking of players from the prior summer season will be used to assign players to teams in the order of their evaluation rankings. New players are interspersed within these rankings based on the judgment of their capabilities.

After the teams in a division are initially set, each resulting team is to be reviewed to ensure that the team has a pitcher, a shortstop, a key outfielder, and is not overloaded with either infielders or outfielders. A manager will also be designated for each team, either someone who registered to do so or failing that, a designated stand-in until the team selects its own. Every attempt is to be made in a best faith effort to make up teams for a balanced and competitive division.

This process is followed until the all division's teams are set.

As an alternative to the above, the Board may decide to hold a winter draft similar to the summer draft.

**K. Standings**

Team standings for the summer and winter regular season are to be determined on a percentage basis. For each team, this percentage is the sum of one point for each win plus one-half point for each tie divided by the total number of games played.

In the case of equal percentage points, the following tiebreakers will be used:

- First, the team with the best record in head-to-head competition.
- Second, the team with the greatest scoring differential (runs for less runs against).
- Last, a coin toss will be used to decide.
- If a split season is being utilized, then the first two tiebreakers listed above will apply to that portion of the season in which the tie occurred.

**L. Cancellation of Games**

Games may be cancelled when, in the judgment of the Field Maintenance Directors, the fields are not in suitable condition for play. They may also be cancelled when the projected wind chill factor for 6:00 PM is 45 degrees or lower. In both cases a message will be left on the weather line announcing the cancellation.

**M. Managerial Suspension of Players**

A manager may suspend any of his/her players for actions detrimental to the team and/or League. Such suspensions are for one game unless the Division Rules Committee approves more. The Board in its discretion may allow an appeal of such suspension.

**N. Sexual Harassment Policy**

It is the policy of the Harris County Senior Softball League that all players are responsible for ensuring that the games are free from sexual harassment. Because of the Harris County Senior Softball League's strong disapproval of offensive or inappropriate sexual behavior at the games, all players must avoid any action or conduct that could be viewed as sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexually harassing nature, when the harassment has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive playing environment.

Any player who has a complaint of sexual harassment at the games by anyone, including other players or visitors, should clearly inform the harasser that his/her behavior is offensive or unwelcome and request that the behavior stop, or contact their manager or member of the Board.

If after examination of the facts, the Board decides the validity of sexual harassment claim, the penalty for such behavior will be a six (6) game suspension for the first offense and a lifetime ban for the second offense.

**2. FIELDS**

**A. Lease**

The League benefits from a long-term lease with Harris County, Texas for the use of the two playing fields. The League is responsible for and maintains the property inside the fences while Harris County maintains the property outside the fences.

An important part of the working relationship with Harris County is the League's acknowledgment of and willingness to follow both the letter and the intent of the lease

agreement. To facilitate this working relationship, each year the Harris County Precinct 3 Commissioner publishes a Lease Agreement Guidelines document.

This Lease Agreement Guidelines document is forwarded to the Board President. Copies of this document are to be copied and distributed to all Board Members, to include the Division Coordinators, and formally reviewed at the Board meeting following receipt of the document.

## **B. Field Maintenance**

### General

It is the League's intention to play on fields maintained to the standards of a professional field maintenance company, whether the actual work is performed by League members or contracted to a professional company. This will not only provide an enjoyable playing environment but will also provide the highest level of safety for the players.

For the purposes of this policy, field maintenance is defined in two categories; tune-ups and major overhauls. All field maintenance and related facilities work is to be done only with the knowledge and approval of the respective Field Directors.

### Tune-Ups

The annual budget shall contain line items for the field tune-ups and shall be submitted by the Director of the respective field. The extent of the work to be performed shall be determined by the Director of the respective field. The work performed shall be overseen by the respective Field Director.

### Major Overhauls

When it is determined by the director of the respective field that a field needs a major overhaul (expected every 4 to 6 years) and the cash reserve is sufficient to pay for such work, this expenditure shall be added to the budget during the annual budget preparation process. Also see *Section 3 Financial – A. Operating Budget* and *C. Cash Reserve*. The work performed shall be overseen by the respective field director.

## **C. League Equipment**

The League will purchase commercial grade equipment for field maintenance purposes.

A League Equipment Schedule shall be kept and updated on both an "as acquired" and "annual" basis by the Treasurer. This Equipment Schedule shall be used to establish residual equipment value for both insurance and replacement purposes.

The annual budget shall contain a line item for equipment replacement as reflected on the Equipment Schedule. The annual amount to be set aside shall be reflective of the replacement cost of the equipment minus the residual equipment value as updated annually. The budget line item is to be funded out of the cash reserve. Also see *Section 3. Financial – A. Operating Budget* and *C. Cash Reserve*.

## **D. Field Use**

The League's intent is that the use of its fields shall be managed for the benefit of the League. The first priority for field use shall be the scheduling of League games in accordance with the game schedules prepared by the Director of Supplies and Equipment. All other field scheduling shall be done through the Field Director responsible for the specific field requested for use.

Field use outside of League play is prohibited unless the team is 1) registered with SSUSA or 2) provides proper liability insurance coverage and a liability waiver (signed by all members of the team) naming the League and Harris County as co-insured parties. Proper liability insurance will consist of a minimum coverage of \$1,000,000.

Rental fees are charged for non-League tournaments, included those intended to raise money for charitable causes. Only for infrequent situations can rental fees be reduced or waived. The reduction or waiver of rental fees for non-League tournaments may only be made with approval of the Board prior to rental activity.

**E. Outside Rental**

The Field Directors are responsible for proposing the amount of the field rental fee to the Board each year as part of the annual budget preparation process. The proposed rental fee shall be reviewed and approved by a majority vote of the Board.

The current rental fee for non-League tournaments is \$150 per field per day plus another \$50 per team for the use of the League fields. In addition, a \$100 field use deposit is required which will be refunded if the fields are left in a clean and playable condition. All teams in the tournament must be 1) registered with SSUSA or 2) provide proper liability insurance coverage and a liability waiver (signed by all members of the team) naming the League and Harris County as co-insured parties.

Field use by non-League teams for practice or games must be scheduled by the Field Director responsible for the field requested. All teams requesting such use must be registered with SSUSA or 2) provide proper liability insurance coverage and a liability waiver (signed by all members of the team) naming the League and Harris County as co-insured parties. Field rental fees for this type of use shall be determined by the appropriate Field Director and approved by the Board. Non-League teams, registered with SSUSA and with League members on their rosters, may use League fields for practice with no rental fee charged provided all non-league members sign a liability waiver.

Field Directors are to notify the Board of any potential rentals and are responsible for all aspects of the rental agreements.

**3. FINANCIAL**

**A. Operating Budget**

As required by the League's Constitution, the League's annual operating budget is to be prepared by the Treasurer for Board review at the December Board meeting and for approval at the January Board meeting. This budget is to include provisions for both the normal operating expenses and for major capital expenditures.

- Normal Operating Expenses  
Normal operating expenses shall be funded by member and sponsor fees assessed and collected during the current playing year. Normal operating expenses include supplies (softballs, chalk, scorebooks, etc.), uniforms, umpire fees, social activities, etc. These expenses must be pre-approved by the Board in the annual budget approval.
- Major Capital Expenses  
Major capital expenses, such as large equipment replacement, field overhauls, etc., shall be funded out of the League's cash reserve (see Item C. below). While estimated amounts for these expenditures may be used for budget purposes, two or more competitive bids, when available, are to be obtained and presented to the Board for approval prior to the purchase of these items. Prior to the approval by the Board of any major capital expenditure, the expenditure must first be approved by the responsible Board Member and the Treasurer must verify that there are sufficient funds in the League's cash reserve.
- Non-budgeted Expenditures

As required by the League's Constitution, any non-budgeted expenditure over \$500, either a normal operating expense or a major capital expenditure, must be approved by the Board prior to being made.

**B. Social Activity Funding**

The number and amounts for social activity funding (awards, dinners, prizes, etc.) shall be planned and approved as part of the annual budget preparation process.

**C. Cash Reserve**

The League's goal is to maintain a cash reserve equal to one half of the anticipated normal annual cash expenses plus \$20,000. This reserve is to be used for major field maintenance (overhauls), large equipment replacement, or any other purpose as the Board may decide.

**D. Fees**

Player

The annual summer season player fee (to include all fee components) shall be set and approved as part of the annual budget process. The annual winter season player fee shall be also set as part of the annual budget process but may be revised prior to the winter registrations being sent out if necessary.

Any returning player whose registration is received after the registration deadline will be charged a \$50 late registration fee. The late registration fee is to be set each year by the Board and also noted on the registration form. It is understood that new players are exempt from paying a late fee for the first season in which they join the League.

Associate

The current annual associate fee is \$15. Fees for widows and charter members are waived.

Sponsor

The current sponsor fee is \$500, except that prior sponsors may renew early for \$400. The President is responsible for proposing the amount of the sponsor fee to the Board at the end of each year prior to the annual budget preparation process. The proposed sponsor fee shall be reviewed and approved by a majority vote of the Board. Also, all proposed sponsor gifts and the projected cost of same are to be approved as part of the annual budget preparation process.

**E. Refunds**

The Board will review and approve all fee refunds.

**F. Umpires**

Paid umpires will be used in all night divisions. Two paid umpires per playoff game for the summer season will be used in all divisions. Every attempt will be made to use SSUSA certified umpires to officiate HCSSL games.

The Board shall set the umpire fees (charged and paid) as part of the annual budget preparation process. All umpires' fees paid shall be reported to the IRS, in accordance with current IRS regulations.

**G. Insurance**

At a minimum, The League shall carry and maintain insurance coverage to include:

- Field Owners Policy: Harris County must be named as a co-insured party and this policy must have minimum liability coverage of \$1,000,000. This policy is to provide insurance for HCSSL, its Board, HCSSL members as well as members

of non-HCSSL teams who use our facilities and are sued for damages or injuries that they cause while using our facilities.

Non-HCSSL teams using our facilities must be either SSUSA registered or must provide HCSSL with proof of liability insurance in addition to having a waiver signed by all members of the team prior to the use of our facilities. Failure of any team to have new players (either temporary or permanent) sign the team waiver form prior to using HCSSL facilities will result in immediate suspension of facility use privileges by the team. Board action is required for the reinstatement of any suspended team

- Directors and Officers Liability: This policy is to provide insurance coverage for any claims against the League's Directors for their actions while they are performing their League duties. The minimum coverage is to be \$1,000,000.
- Equipment Loss Coverage: This policy is to provide insurance reimbursement for any equipment loss, other than through flooding. Premium is based on the annually updated Equipment Schedule.

At the Board's option, additional insurance coverage may be purchased to provide for field use by non-League entities. The cost of such insurance shall be borne by the recipient entity or entities.

#### **H. Member Death**

Upon the death of an active player or associate member, the Treasurer will make a donation of \$100 to the family's charity of choice or, if appropriate, directly to the immediate family. The Schedule and Supplies Director shall maintain the plaques of deceased members.

#### **I. Pitcher Protection Reimbursements**

HCSSL provides pitcher protection screens for pitchers to use at their option. The League requires pitchers to wear pitcher protection face masks and encourages pitchers to use other personal protective equipment as they may deem necessary. In support of this, the League will reimburse half the cost of a protection face mask purchased by any HCSSL member for his/her own use in HCSSL games.

#### **J. Contributions to HCSSL**

For selected and rare specified needs, HCSSL will accept, but not solicit, contributions, acknowledging and thanking each donor, and treating those contributions as part of its general funds, using the contributions, at the Board's discretion for the general benefit of the league.

Should an individual contribution exceed a benchmark amount (e.g., \$1,000), HCSSL will endeavor to identify a specific use toward which that contribution would be used, and so communicate such use to the donor.

For those occasional situations where HCSSL has an identified need and chooses to solicit contributions (e.g., the Field #2 replacement scoreboard campaign some years ago), HCSSL will assure that such contributions are used specifically for the intended purpose and communicate the status/completion of such to league members and donors.

A donation made for a specified purpose not currently in the league's plans (e.g., for the purchase of equipment the league doesn't currently plan to purchase) will be returned to the donor.

#### **K. Treasurer's Duties**

In addition to the duties outlined in the League's Constitution, the Treasurer shall present to the Board at its scheduled monthly meeting, at a minimum, a verbal recap of the significant cash transactions for the current month and all other financial information he deems pertinent. In addition, he will present to the Board a hard copy of the summary sheet of the current month's bank statements and a reconciliation of the balances in these accounts to the cash balances in the financial statements.

As a further security measure, the Vice-President will be given on-line viewing privileges for the League's bank accounts. It will be his responsibility to access these accounts on a periodic basis to determine if any unusual transactions have occurred.

4. **OTHER**

**A. Board Minutes**

Board minutes will be recorded and maintained as part of the League files by the League Secretary.

**B. League Documents**

Constitution

The President will distribute and lead the Board in reviewing the Constitution at the November Board meeting.

Administrative Policies

The President will distribute and lead the Board in reviewing the Administrative Policies document during the November and December Board meetings. Board-approved updates will be finalized and distributed to the Board Members by the January Board meeting. Additionally, as policies are created or modified during the year by the Board, the Secretary will update and redistribute the document to the Board members. A copy of the Administrative Policies and all interim updates shall be posted on the website.

Lease

The League fields are leased from Harris County, Texas. The Harris County Commissioner of Precinct 3 provides a copy of the lease agreement to the President who maintains it as part of the League files.

Lease Agreement Guidelines

The Harris County Precinct 3 Lease Agreement Guidelines document is sent to the President each year from the Park Superintendent. A copy is to be distributed to all Board Members and reviewed at the first Board meeting after receipt of the document.

Rules

A draft copy of the rules for the summer season shall be presented to the Board at its January meeting for the Board's approval. A final copy of the rules will be distributed to the managers prior to the draft session.

In general, the rules for the summer season will also be effective through the coming winter season. However, subject to approval by the Board at its October meeting, certain modifications, such as relaxed restrictions for pick-up players and number of players required not to forfeit a game, may be implemented.

Game Schedules

The game schedules will be available for distribution prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> game of the summer and winter seasons.

Team Rosters

The team rosters will be available for distribution prior to the beginning of the summer and winter seasons.

#### Newsletter

The newsletter will be sent by email to all members, with a paper version to be posted on the scorehouse bulletin board. The newsletter shall be published at least three times a year as follows:

- July – Announcement of Board positions up for election and winter league registration
- September – Election candidate bios and winter league registration
- December – Summer league registration forms and calendar of events

#### Directory

The directory shall be completed and distributed yearly by the end of June. At a minimum, the directory shall contain the current Constitution and other League documents the Board shall choose to be included for informational purposes.

#### Publication of League Documents

It is the League's Secretary's responsibility to have the current season's League documents placed in a notebook in each of the League's score booths. These documents are the Administrative Policies, Rules, Game Schedules, and Team Rosters.

### **C. Board Elections**

In early July of each year, the Board or Board President will name an active player as Chairman of the Nominating Committee. The Chairman will promptly solicit players from all divisions to serve on the committee in identifying and soliciting qualified candidates for the upcoming open Board positions as well as other duties of the committee.

The July newsletter will contain a notice of the Board positions to be filled in the upcoming election, listing duties and required skills of each open position. This notice will also identify the members of the Nominating Committee and request that all interested candidates identify themselves to members of the Nominating Committee.

A special "Election Edition" newsletter to be issued in early September will contain a list of candidates with their "mini-bios". The "mini-bios" will contain only the following data: their years in HCSSL (as player and associate), the division(s) in which they have played, any HCSSL Board experience or leadership experience they have had, and any relevant personal and/or professional skills or experience.

Prior to the last week of the regular season, the balloting at the fields will take place. The Chairman of the Nominating Committee will prepare and give to each Division Coordinator a team election package for each team manager in the division. This package will list the players on the team and will contain ballots for each team member.

The Division Coordinator will deliver these packages to each team manager. The team manager will be responsible for presenting the ballots to his players and collecting the completed ballots and returning the ballots and package to the Division Coordinator the same night. A notation of those players who did not vote must be on the package returned to the Division Coordinator.

Also, prior to the last week of the regular season, ballots are to be mailed to all associate members with instructions that they are to be mailed back to HCSSL's Post Office Box (with the notation on the return envelope of "Board Election Vote") or brought to the October General Membership Meeting.

All members, either player or associate (a person who has paid the associate member fee for the current year), who have not previously voted, may cast their vote at the October General Meeting.

The results of the election are to be determined and announced at the October General Membership Meeting by the Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

**D. Affiliations**

League teams are to be registered with the Senior Softball-USA (SSUSA). This is to include summer and winter season teams and a team consisting of all substitute players participating in either the summer or winter season that have not been assigned to a team.

**E. League Sponsored Tournaments**

The League may sponsor tournaments provided proper insurance is purchased and in effect for the tournament.

**F. Tournament Teams**

Tournament or traveling teams are not affiliated with the League even though a majority of team players may play on a League sanctioned team during either the summer or winter season.

**G. Board Action Outside of Scheduled Meetings**

If the President determines that Board action is required between scheduled meetings, then either electronic (internet or fax) or telephone polling shall be used, the resulting action of which shall be ratified by the Board at the next scheduled Board meeting.

All Board members are to be immediately notified of the results of the polling and given the final tally by name of those for and against. Also, the results of this polling shall be documented by the League Secretary in Executive Minutes which are to be included in the minutes of the next monthly Board meeting.

**H. Membership**

There are currently two types of HCSSL membership:

1. Players (also referred to as "regular" or "active" members)
2. Associates
  - Originally intended for former players and/or their spouses.
  - Since expanded to include anyone, of any age, who wishes to support and remain in contact with HCSSL.

Both types of members may vote in elections for Board members or to approve changes to the Constitution. Both receive the newsletter and are listed in the annual directory, and both receive copies of the directory.

Participation in HCSSL games is limited to players; participation in batting practice sessions is limited to players and associates 50 years of age and older.

**I. "Job Descriptions"**

To assist in the successful transition of leadership, and capture the benefits of things learned and done by previous Board members, each Board member is requested to write a "job description" of the position he/she holds and to pass it on to his/her successor upon leaving office. The intent is not merely to document the list of things for which a position is responsible as described in the Constitution, but rather also to capture the associated approaches, techniques, timing, and contacts associated with doing the job well. The instructions are to try to capture all the things you wish someone had told you when you first took over your position, along with others you've learned or created during

your time in office, to be passed on to your successor. A copy of each "job description" should also be given to the Secretary to be kept along with other key HCSSL documents as a way of assuring its availability if/when needed in the future.

**J. Record Retention Schedule**

The following records are to be maintained as follows:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Retention Schedule</u>	<u>Person Responsible</u>
Tax Returns (990EZ)	Prior 7 years	Treasurer
1099's & 1098's	Prior 7 years	Treasurer
General Ledger/Financial Statements		
With supporting doc.	Prior 3 years	Treasurer
W/O supporting doc.	Addn. 7 years	Treasurer
Insurance Policies	Current Year	Treasurer
Player Registrations	Current + 3 years	Treasurer
Player Evaluations	Current Year	Vice President
Articles of Incorporation	Indefinitely	Secretary
Disciplinary Letters	Indefinitely	Secretary
Constitution (Current)	Indefinitely	Secretary
Items of Historical Importance	Indefinitely	Secretary
Board Meeting minutes	Current + 3 years	Secretary
Lease Agreement	Current + 1 prior	President
Lease Agreement Guidelines	Current Year	President
Administrative Policy	Current + 1 prior	Secretary
Playing Rules	Current + 1 prior	Secretary
General Correspondence	Current + 3 years	Secretary
Board Member Job Descriptions	Current	Secretary
Player Suspension Report	Indefinitely	Secretary

**K. Board Member Award**

All voting members of the Board of Directors, who have served two consecutive years (i.e. 4 consecutive seasons) shall be presented with an award jacket in recognition of their service.