



2024
1st Edition

AROUND THE BASES

A Glimpse into 2024

FROM THE 2024 SOFTBALL BOARD

Softball Members,

Welcome to 2024. The Softball Board had its first official meeting January 4th and to say that we are excited and hopeful is an understatement. We already have dynamic leaders working on the 2024 season with innovative ideas designed to improve our leagues.

We want to thank **Chris Pacitti, Bob Baxendale and April Morgan** for taking on the critical roles as League Coordinators. As our desire is to develop a system of “shared-governance,” these positions carry much more authority and responsibility than in the past. These 3 individuals with their League Operations Committees will define how each league plays the game that we love. They have already been meeting with their Rules Committees to review and revise league rules. Many of you have already been contacted to provide your insight and expertise in improving our leagues. To that end, don’t shy away from taking on leadership roles if you are approached. There is a spot for all of you!

Another key leader is **Bob Crane** who returns as the CORT (Co-Educational Recreation Team) Coordinator. This has probably been one of the most successful and needed softball programs here at SCP. Bob and his dedicated team bring their passion for softball education to the field. Nothing is too basic for this group—they teach it all. Bob also encourages league players to attend his CORT sessions when they want extra instruction in a particular area.

And just how do we attract new softball players? Well, that is largely due to **Mike Berry**, head of Player Development. Mike personally reaches out to each new resident, attends Homeowner Orientation meetings and spreads softball cheer throughout the year. One of Mike’s responsibilities is to schedule Try-It and New Player Evaluations for us. See the schedule for these activities under the **FROM THE FIELD** section below on page 3. Thanks, Mike!



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Run, Bob, run!!

MEN'S A LEAGUE HOT SPOT

The Men's A-league is designed for players who have previous baseball or softball experience & still have the athletic ability & skills to play at an advanced level. Even though the game moves faster, the players are all out there for friendly competition and to have a good time!

With **Chris Pacitti** as League Coordinator, The ML-A Rules

and Competition Committees have been meeting to map out the new look for ML-A for Spring 2024. Managers for this season are **Morgan Fisher, Brett Pippin, Gary Mistovich** and **Dave Fields**. The Men's League pre-draft meeting is Sunday, February 25 with the draft on Sunday, March 3.

"A true softball player plays because they love the game, not to impress others."

JERRY LIBBY KEEPS HIS EYE ON THE BALL



THE B-LINE

We've all chosen SCP for its beauty and, for many of us, climate suitable for year-round outdoor activities, not least among them softball. This sport is well suited for the 55+ Active Adult lifestyle we're seeking. We appreciate those that have come before us to establish the program and for current leadership for making needed improvements.

Congratulations to the new Board and for redefining the role of the League Coordinators. **Bob Baxendale** is the coordinator for the Men's B-League (ML-B) and has asked **Lindsay Lancaster** and **John Vreeland** to defend him from the angry hoards. In addition, Lindsay will be defining the rules under which the B-League will operate this Spring, and John will be strengthening the player evaluation program. But there are plenty of ways for others to be involved in ML-B activities, so check out the opportunities on our website at scpsftball.org.

Looking forward to seeing everyone on the field this Spring!





Out at first!!

LADIES LEAGUE SOFTBALL

Welcome to Ladies League (LL) Spring 2024. Led by League Coordinator, **April Morgan**, the LL members are already hard at work developing new rules, organizing committees and planning social activities for the spring. To date, April has recruited over 25 LL members to help redesign the LL. She has assigned members to the Rules, Competition, Player Development, Hospitality / Event Planning, and Communications Committees. She also recruited several LL players as field resources.

Returning for the Spring season are managers **Diane Pippin** (manager of the season championship Minit Car Wash team) and **Teresa Pierce** (manager of the EOS tournament championship Visiting Angels). And stepping up for a repeat performance is **Missy Kirchem** who has been a player, manager, and instructor in the LL. There's room for 1 more manager. Don't be shy—reach out to April and she can provide you all the information and support you'll need to join this group of special ladies.

New for the Spring 2024 is the inclusion of men as assistant managers and team coaches. In the past, these dedicated gentlemen have conducted LL practices, taught skills clinics, mentored managers and provided individual instruction for our LL players without Game Day recognition. On a trial basis for the Spring, the LL has elected to include these coaches on the field. Not a step backwards as some might think, but a great accomplishment using the best talent to hone skills for our LL.

There are still many ways for you to become involved in the LL this Spring. Just ask. April can be reached at scpladiesballcommittee@gmail.com or just look for her at the field—she's always there!

FROM THE FIELD

Check out our schedule for
Try-It and
New Player Evaluations:

Men's League Try-It Sessions

- Jan 31 from 1—3 pm
- Feb 3 from 10 AM—Noon
- Feb 5 from 1—3 PM

Men's League New Player Eval

- Feb 17 from 1—3 PM
- Feb 24 from 11 am—1 pm

Ladies League Try-It Sessions

- ◆ Feb 1 from 1—3 pm
- ◆ Feb 3 from Noon—2 pm
- ◆ Feb 6 from 10 AM—Noon

Ladies League New Player Eval

- ◆ Feb 17 from 11 am—1 pm
- ◆ Feb 24 from 1—3 pm



GET TO KNOW YOUR SOFTBALL BUDDIES



Nancy receives the Diane Skelton Award.



Brad Wideman is a recipient of the coveted 80-year softball cap.

Nancy Borders & her husband Rick have lived in SCP since 2013, but did you know that she worked in the federal justice system for 30 years? She even provided witness protection for a young lady threatened by her criminal family.

Other than San Francisco, Nancy has lived & worked in GA & is one of those rare Atlanta natives. She has moved 26 times in her lifetime. That's a lot of boxes.

But we know her best as an SCP pitcher. Ironically, she didn't pitch until playing here since 2014, but played CF & 3B on high school & travel teams where she was on the 1966 Atlanta City Championship team. And she is known for her famous phrase, **"You can do it!"**

A fun fact: Nancy ran 6 miles a day, 5 days a week for 25 years through the streets of ATL, which is 1-1/2 times the equatorial circumference of the earth!

Brad Wideman is accomplished in both sports & education. He was a pitcher on the winning team in the 1953 Little League World Series. In 1970, as a college professor at Marshall, he recalls the emotional devastation following the Marshall plane crash after which the NCAA granted the school special permission to play freshmen in 1971.

Brad received his PhD from the University of Alabama during the Bear Bryant years. Brad also taught at Mercer and Georgia State Universities.

He and his wife of 60-years moved to SCP in 2010 where he played on the original 3 co-ed softball teams. He even took a turn at acting with Footlights for 5 years.

But of all his accomplishments, Brad says that his work as a hospice volunteer has been his greatest life experience. His philosophy about SCP softball? It's a game—let's enjoy it!

SPONSOR HIGHLIGHT—COOL SCREENS

You've all seen the Cool Screens softball jerseys, right? Well, let us introduce you to Mike Winn, the owner of Cool Screens who started his family business in 1999 in Alpharetta. In addition to his wife, son & sister-in-law, Mike also employs a longtime family friend. Mike's college job of tinting residential and commercial windows blossomed into a successful business to provide additional services for his customer base. In addition to retractable & motorized shades, screens, awnings and security shutters, Mike added the EZEBreeze clear vinyl system in 2002 for those who want to enjoy an enclosed porch year-round. Now that old concrete slab can become your home's focal point.

Cool Screens has grown because of customer referrals, company integrity and a superior product, as well as Mike's active participation in community outreach. You'll see Mike & his team at our vendor fair because they value direct communication and establishing professional relationships with the community. Mike says that even the challenging days are worth doing.

When Mike is not working, he likes to kayak fish at Lake Lanier and Crystal River. He loves to cook shrimp & crawfish etouffee and is a self-proclaimed grill master. During his college years, Mike was an accomplished racquetball player winning national titles, so the love of sports comes naturally.

Mike has been improving our homes for many years and is grateful for the opportunities at SCP. So check out his website at CoolScreensGA.com or call 770-667-8200 for a complete description of the products and services they provide. Make sure you visit Mike at our vendor fair and thank him for his community support.

CORT NEWS

Returning for the 2024 Softball Season are Bob Crane and his minion of instructional softball gurus. These special individuals are dedicated to teaching the basics of slow-pitch softball regardless of your experience and ability. Probably one of the most successful softball programs at SCP, here's a message directly from Bob:

Is our CORT program designed for YOU?

*It is if **YOU** are in any of these categories:*

- ◆ *Never played any kind of baseball or softball in your life*
- ◆ *Played a little ball in the past, but might like to see if it is as much fun as it looks like here at SCP*
- ◆ *Played a lot of ball, but I'm just not as young as I used to be.*

YEAH RIGHT, how is that possible?

It works because we teach fundamentals right from the beginning with how to pitch and catch, how to properly swing the bat and how to properly field each position on the field. We do this with both group and individual instruction, and we do it as a team. In fact, our program may be the happiest team in the world. (Sorry Disney).

You don't believe it? Talk with us or just come out and join us.



*“In softball, it’s not how good you are, but how good you want to be.”
Anonymous*

THE UMPIRE’S CORNER

“I made a game effort to argue, but two things were against me: the umpires and the rules.” -Leo Durocher.

In Fall 2023, we had about 23 umpires. We assigned Head Umpires to each league & generally used the same set of field umpires in each league. Our goal is to have 3 or 4 umpires for each game.

Prior to each season, we hold umpire training for new and returning umpires. As the level of play has improved over the last few years, we have enhanced our umpire training to meet these challenges.

If you're interested in learning more about being an umpire, you can contact Mike Smith, our Umpire Coordinator, through the Club website.

Rule reminder: Appeal

An appeal play is a play on which an umpire may not make a decision until requested by a manager. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch, before an intentional walk, or before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair

territory on their way to the bench or dugout area. On the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpires leave the field of play.

Types of appeal plays:

- * Missing a base.
- * Leaving a base early on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
- * Batting out of order.
- * Attempting to advance to 2B after making a turn at 1B (umpire's judgment)
- * After the 3rd out to nullify a run.
- * Illegal substitute – must be made while they are in the game and before the umpires leave the playing field.



Your 2024 Softball Board Members

Mark Rettig,

President

Triffy Pacitti,

Vice President

Mike Smith,

Corresponding Secretary

Steve Heck,

Recording Secretary

Tom Restaino,

Treasurer



Pictures courtesy of George Bradley Photography et al

What would YOU like to see in the newsletter?

Send your suggestions to
SCPVP2024@gmail.com

THE HISTORY OF SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL

According to **facts.net**, "Softball was born in the late 19th century in Chicago as an indoor version of baseball...to allow baseball players to practice during winter and rainy days. Who knew a cozy gymnasium could give rise to such a fantastic sport? The sport wasn't always called softball. Other names included **kitten ball, mush ball, diamond ball**, and even indoor baseball before it was officially named softball in 1926. Softball is played in more than 100 countries around the world. It's estimated that 40 million people play the sport in the United States alone."

Wikipedia states: "The earliest known softball game was played in Chicago, Illinois, on Thanksgiving Day, 1887. It took place at the Farragut Boat Club at a gathering to hear the outcome of the Yale University and Harvard University football game. When the score was announced and bets were settled, a Yale alumnus threw a boxing glove at a Harvard supporter. The Harvard fan grabbed a stick and swung at the rolled-up glove. George Hancock, a reporter there, called out "Play ball!" and the game began, with the boxing glove tightened into a ball, a broom handle serving as a bat. This first contest ended with a score of 41–40. The ball, being soft, was fielded barehanded."

At SCP, senior softball was born March 2012 when we fielded 3 co-ed teams. In Spring 2016, there were enough players to split into a Men's league and a Ladies league. Finally, in Spring 2021, the men split their league into a Men's A League (ML-A) and a Men's B league (ML-B). Since then, other than the COVID Spring 2020 season, we have fielded as many as 13 teams in a season, playing more than 60 games per season.

Today, Senior Softball - USA (SSUSA) governs our league play. Find them at seniorsoftball.com. A link to the most up-to-date SSUSA rules can be found on scpsoftball.org. Check it out.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- * Registration: January 27 – February 10
- * Men's League Pre-Draft Meeting: February 25
- * ML-A Draft: March 3
- * LL Pre-Draft Meeting: March 4
- * ML-B Draft: March 6
- * LL Draft / Reveal Party: March 8
- * Bat Testing: March 2, 9, 16
- * Pre-Season Tournaments: March 23 – March 30
- * Opening Day: March 30
- * Spring Break (no games or makeups): April 27 & 28
- * Hilton Head Tournament (away) May 21-22 (tentative)
- * Memorial Day (no games): May 27
- * Closing Day (All-Star games): June 1
- * Banquet and General Meeting: June 1 (TBD) with Alternate General Meeting (if needed) June 4