

Date: Wed, Jan-19-2005 8:00 PM
Subject: Updated Rules and Other Info

The Senior Softball Women's Advisory Council (SSWAC) met at the Senior Softball Summit this past weekend in Winter Haven, FL. We had a marvelous meeting of the minds, and the spirit of cooperation has never been better. We made some decisions that we believe will be good for all of senior women's softball. Here is a summary of those decisions.

1. Age divisions

All organizations except for USSSA are now in transition to true age divisions. SSWC will continue the transition in the 50+ division, and this year there can be up to 5 players who are 48 or 49 on a 50+ team. LVSSA and SPA are using the same rules as SSWC for the 50+ division this year. SSWS is just starting their transition, and they will allow up to 5 players who are 46-49 on a 50+ team this year. They will also transition all other divisions and allow 5 players who are one year younger than the division. We are encouraging USSSA to start their transition soon.

All organizations are encouraged to offer 40+ and 45+ Masters Level divisions at senior tournaments to encourage continued women's participation in the sport as they approach their senior years. Some organizations already do, and some have rules against anything but Senior Level divisions. SSWC currently has a 40+ division that is growing every year. Next year, SSWC will start to offer 45+ divisions at tournaments as well.

2. Number of defensive players in the 50+ division

Some organizations have been using 10 and some have been using 11 defensive players in this division. We decided that it is time to move to 11 defensive players in the 50+ division. All but SPA will implement it immediately. This rule will become effective April 1st. We are implementing this rule in April so that coaches will have time to prepare their teams to play with 11 defensive players, and then the teams will have the opportunity to get experience with this new defensive alignment before starting into the championship tournaments later in the season. There are two primary reasons for this rule change:

a. Safety - the pitcher is at less risk with the 11th defensive player because fewer players will purposely hit up the middle. This becomes more of an issue as we get older and our reflexes slow down. Our feeling is that 50+ is the correct place to start it (especially now that we have very few players in their 40s still playing in this division and we will soon have only players over 50 in this division).

b. Participation - more players get to participate on defense.

3. Equalizer rule

We have determined that in the case where there is more than one age division's difference between 2 teams, the older team should no longer be spotted 5 runs for each difference in age division. Once we do the initial spotting of 5 runs, it works out to be more fair if we add 2 runs for each difference in age division after that. For example, in SSWC a 40+ team will spot a 50+ team 5 runs because 50+ is the next age group up from 40+ (that will change next year as we start a 45+ division), and a 55+ team will spot a 65+ team 7 runs (5 + 2) because 65+ is two age groups up from 55+. This rule is not used very often, but we want it to be fair when we have this situation.

4. Umpires for championship games

We made the point that it is very important to have at least 2 umpires

for championship games in every tournament. The Summit organizations agreed that this was ideal, and they indicated that they will make sure of it at least in championship tournaments.

5. The ball

We decided that we want to continue to use the .47 core ball for all women's tournaments. ASA hedged a little, but we believe that most organizations will adopt this policy. We made the point that a safety issue caused the men to go to the .44 core ball, but we do not believe this is a safety issue in the women's game. The livelier ball makes for a better game for women.

These were our main decisions from the SSWAC. We encourage any of you with tournament information (additions or changes) to please contact our Tournament Coordinator, Connie Byro at grannysoftball@aol.com.

We also encourage all of you to continue to follow the latest women's information and issues at our two web sites:

www.softballrating.com/women.php
www.womensseniorsoftball.com

We are working at updating our tournament information yet again this week, so watch the web sites regularly for complete lists of tournaments from all organizations. These lists are not yet final for this year, so keep up with the changes.

Also, continue to check the SSWC info at www.seniorsoftball.com/women.

I am attaching a copy of the updated 2005 SSWC Women's Rules with the changes highlighted so they are easy to find.

I will send out an updated list of the 2005 Women's Tournaments soon.

-- Pat