

Englewood Senior Softball League Expansion

A number of years ago, the League adopted a Mission Statement:

- To provide the opportunity to play recreational senior softball for as many men over the age of sixty as possible, and
- To create a safe playing environment in two divisions that separate players primarily based on their skill levels and abilities.

Our success is evident. We have approximately 220 players on eight teams in each of two divisions and have accommodated almost every player wishing to play in Englewood. This success has led to the question “what do we do next”?

With new retirees moving to the area each year and with existing players maintaining their health and conditioning longer than previous generations, the Board of Directors recognized that the League needs a longer term plan to expand and manage the League, if it is to meet the Mission Statement.

Adding teams to existing Divisions:

Prior to the 2018 season, the Board had a contingency plan that would have added a ninth team to the Gold Division or would have created a development team. We agreed that having an odd number of teams in a division creates scheduling problems and the introduction of byes which is not popular with the players.

We also discussed formation of an 80s team that would play exhibition games against Silver Division teams but failed to attract enough players, many of whom did not want to leave their current Silver team.

Formation of a Bronze Division:

The Gold Division has become very competitive and we will continue to attract younger players with a lot of previous experience playing the game. We can only accommodate these new players if we force players with declining skills to move to the Silver Division.

In turn, we can only accommodate the movement of Gold players to the Silver Division if we force players with declining skills to move off these teams. However, without another Division to move them to, we would not be meeting our mission statement and we would not be acting fairly with respect to players that have supported the League for many years.

The Board has decided that the best way to address this issue is to create a third division which will be designated as the Bronze Division. Furthermore, the Board recognizes that there is a wide disparity in player skill levels at all ages and that the League must begin the process of having skills and ability, and not age, determine the Division suitability for each player.

The following is an outline of an operating plan for 2019, adopted by the Board, that will add the capacity for 25 to 30 new players by initially creating two Bronze teams. In future years, the number of teams in the Bronze Division will increase to accommodate additional players. Since the majority of the new players signing up for the tryouts are in their early 60s, it will be necessary to return to the use of a protected roster to encourage players with declining skills to move to the next division. An unprotected player will retain the right to participate in the tryout and draft for his current division. Players may only play in one division and the current “grandfather status” is terminated following the 2018 season.

	<u>GOLD</u>	<u>SILVER</u>	<u>BRONZE</u>
Number of Teams (1)	8	8	2
Minimum Age (2)	60	67*	67*
Roster Size (3)	13, 14 or 15	14	14
Maximum Protected Roster (4)	11 for 13 roster 12 for 14 roster 13 for 15 roster	12	n/a
Tryout/Draft	Yes	Yes	Paper draft
Playing Days (5)	Wed/Fri	Tue/Thur	Tue/Thur
Runner from Home (6)	No	No	Yes

Notes:

(1) The final number of teams may vary based on the number of new players that sign up. Additional teams would likely be added to the Bronze Division.

(2) Effective for the 2020 season the minimum age (other than 60) will be eliminated and all players will be selected on the basis of their skills and ability. Players under 67 at the discretion of the Coordinator.

(3) Gold Managers may choose to have either a 13,14 or 15 man roster. The Manager will declare the roster size at the time the preliminary roster is filed.

(4) Managers may protect up to a maximum of 2 players less than the declared roster, There is no minimum protected roster size and Managers are encouraged to leave players unprotected whose skills and ability aligns better with the next Division. Non-protected players may choose to re-enter the draft and can be re-drafted by their original team.

(5) Gold, no change. Silver, no change except each Silver team would play each Bronze team once at an 11:00 game on a Thursday. The two Bronze teams would play each other every Tuesday at 9:30.

(6) Runner from home eliminated in Silver Division to encourage players that require this rule to move to the Bronze Division.