

Senior softball league swings into action

By RUSTY PRAY

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ENGLEWOOD — Without his ever saying the words, Rudy Davis' message was clear: Play ball!

The guy entrusted with some of the recruiting for the Englewood Senior Softball C.B. White Men's Slow Pitch League was champing at the bit to get started. Fifty-eight men showed up at the Englewood Sports Complex in football-like weather

Monday morning to try out for teams in one of the league's two divisions. Davis, a second baseman for the reigning champion of the 60-plus division, Norma Jean's, liked what he saw.

"These are the best numbers we ever had at tryouts," he said.

The 58 guys who showed up would spend a couple of hours hitting, fielding and running for the managers of the league's teams — eight in the Gold Division (60-plus), and six in the Silver

Division. The players would be picked in a draft. As is common with leagues in these age groups, guys who could run were at the top of the draft list. Guys who could run, hit and throw? Off the charts.

The season wouldn't begin until Thursday and Friday, and runs through March, but the sounds of bats twanging and balls nestling into leather said it all.

Softball season was here. "We're overjoyed," Davis said, speaking for himself,

the managers and league commissioner Richard Entlich, who was busy running the tryout. "This is just terrific having so many guys — and a lot of quality players."

The league was started in the early 1990s. It has about 200 players in the two age groups, and it basically runs three days a week, with an open practice from 8:30 a.m. to noon Mondays, Silver Division games

Tuesdays and Thursdays, and Gold Division games Wednesdays and Fridays.

"I think there are three things that make this



Jay Linden, a 66-year-old Englewood resident, gets set to try out for the senior slow-pitch league for the first time. He finally has time to play a little softball after retiring as a civil engineer from the Englewood Water District.



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league attractive," Davis said. "It's competitive. Everyone stays friends — every player has to shake hands with every other player after games. And you have to run at least to first base. It's good exercise. Everybody's got to be working, swinging a bat."

Jay Linden, 66, was trying out for the first time. Linden, who plays second and catches, has been an Englewood resident since 1971. He never had time to play when he was working as a civil engineer for the Englewood Water District. But he recently

retired, so "I have the time."

Dave Ege, on the other hand, has been around the block a few times. The 65-year-old Englewood resident is in his fifth year in the league. He still can chase down a fly ball pretty good, so he plays

outfield for Howards Restaurant in the Gold Division. He was on hand to help his team with the draft.

When he first came down to Englewood from South Jersey, he didn't like it much.

"I was homesick," he said.

A neighbor introduced him to the league, and now "I'm enjoying my second childhood," Ege said. "Three days a week I come out here, and it's the most fun I have."

For more information, go to <http://englewood-seniorsoftball.weebly.com>.



Richard Entlich talks to prospective players before holding tryouts Monday for the C.B. White Men's Senior Softball League at the Englewood Sports Complex.
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A hitter gets ready to take a few swings before many watchful eyes.



Guys get ready to take some grounders at third base and shortstop during the tryouts.