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# Background

This survey was conducted because of a suggestion at the 2019 Annual General Meeting and to find out how the membership felt about a variety of topics.

We conducted different surveys for the drafted divisions and the Cuthbertson division.

This report is for the drafted division only.

Some of the topics considered were:

* How to attract/keep members
* How teams were structured and how to level the playing field across teams and for women.
* How to best provide different types of information to members

Open Ended Responses

On review, the open ended responses sometimes did not relate directly to the question; therefore, when appropriate the comments were moved to a question they were directed to.

Additionally, when there were enough responses about the same topic they were reported together.

# Summary

We had a 56% response from these divisions. Players said they played in ESSPA for love of the game, physical activity, to socialize, because of the quality diamonds and their central location. Most players wanted to play as competitively as possible with players of both genders. Email is the preferred method of contact with website and coach being second. Most people do not want to be involved in everyday decision making but would like a say in rule changes - a simple vote. Most respondents have played between 2 and 7 years in the league and were between the ages 55 and 69.

We would like to thank those respondents who took the time to express their appreciation for the volunteer work the Board members put into running the league.

Based on the survey results we recommend the following:

**General:**

* This report is given to division coordinators from 2019 for review and feedback.

**League recommendations**

* *Promotion*: Use Central location, quality diamonds, a covered location with seating to socialize after the games, access to washrooms and the meeting more people and knowing people on the other teams because of the draft to promote our league
* *Social Fees*: For ease of management do not include social fees in the registration fee. Social function will have to stand on their own, with people paying if they wished to attend.
* *Small ball/Big ball*: Allow women the option of hitting the small ball across all divisions
* *Rules:*
  + Rules will be posted on the website
  + Rules will be given to the team leaders/managers.
  + Rules will be given to any designated umpire.
  + Over the winter:
    - Solicit 2-3 people from each division, preferably at the AGM, to form a Rules Committee to review the rules over the winter, redraft as required and present to the Board (annually)
    - Present revised rules to the division leaders first for comment and then the membership prior to the season start
  + During the season:
    - Solicit input from members via email if rule changes are being considered
* Umpires:
  + Umpires will be designated by the team leaders.
  + Umpires must attend a training session
* *Substitute runners:*
  + A substitute runner will only be permitted due to injury.
  + The injured player will only be allowed to catch, pitch, play 1st or 3rd
  + Every at bat after that will require that they have a runner from home.
  + The runner from home must be the last out of the same gender.
* *Harmony:*
  + Rules will include guidelines to deal with rules not being followed or enforced.
* *Subs during playoffs:* Special dispensation could be given to a team who due to injury or other unforeseen circumstances, does not have enough players to play so that they may pick up a sub during play offs if all of the team leaders agree. The sub would play for that team only. Any limit on numbers?
* *To encourage membership*: External subs (those not playing on an ESSPA team) will be allowed to play 2-3 regular season games per team (any division?) with no cost. They must sign the waiver. Names will be recorded on game sheets that are turned in. This is to encourage new people to join the league.
* *Game sheets:*
  + Game sheets will be used to record:
    - Game statistics
    - Team players substitutions
    - Document issues of conduct & any action taken
  + Game sheets will be submitted after every game in order to:
    - keep track of subs,
    - to analyze stats (e.g. measure success of rule changes like big ball/small ball, etc.)
    - to review documented issues around conduct
* *Registration:* Gather how new registrants learned about ESSPA in order to assist promotion
* *Communication:*
  + Continue with email communication on all levels (team, division, league wide)
  + For the league or division wide communication ESSPA could consider email with a shortcut to the website & on the website have different areas for communication to the league and each division that can be accessed at later date
  + During the playing season, for members without email ESSPA could consider printouts to:
    - Coaches with participants name, or
    - Mailboxes at the diamonds for pickup, or
    - Bulletin boards at the diamonds.
  + Website manager talk to RAMP about the ability to download a Team Schedule into a Calendar App to assist in time management
* Team Structure:
  + Invite members to view the team structure process in order to identify possible future participants, gain input from interested members, and possibly identify members to participate in assigning new members to teams during the season

**Hirsch recommendations**

* A list of 60+ players from Cuthbertson will be made available to team leaders/managers to encourage them to play in Hirsch. Players will be allowed to play a maximum of 3 games per every team in the division during regular season play. Names will be recorded on the game sheet and game sheets will be turned in.
* Review comments to consider whether women should be evenly spaced across teams and/or on the field.

**Hansen recommendations**

* Make Hansen an officially Co-Ed division.

**Brawner recommendations**

* Because of the comments about team structuring in we recommended Brawner either adopt the Hirsh or Hansen method of creating teamsT.
* Make Brawner an officially Co-Ed division.
* Consider whether older players:
  + Regardless of gender, should have the option of hitting the small ball and/or using a senior bat
  + Should get to 1st if their hit reaches grass in the outfield
  + Should be evened out over the teams

**Co-ed rules – In keeping with other co-ed leagues**

* Set a number of women to men ratio dependent on registration ratio.
* Set the number of women required to be on the field at all times. Should an injury occur during the game, or a team is unable to get a female sub for a missing female player, the team would be required to play a player short and take an automatic out when batting.
* Big Ball/Small Ball, with ladies being given the option to hit the big or small ball.

# Response Rate

All responses are anonymous.

The below table of responses for the drafted divisions’ shows:

* An overall response rate of almost 56% with Hansen having the highest response rate at almost 60%
* Overall respondents by gender were almost 70% male to almost 30% female with 3 respondents not specifying their gender.
* The % of females in 2019 was 19% indicating overall a larger % of our female members responded to the survey and by division (Hirsch, Hansen & Brawner) a higher/lower/higher %
* The male respondents have a much stronger voice in Hirsch & Hansen.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| By gender within division | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Hirsch | | Hansen | | Brawner | | Div blank | | Total | |
|  | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| male | 27 | 79.4% | 35 | 74.5% | 33 | 58.9% | 2 | 50.0% | 97 | 68.8% |
| female | 5 | 14.7% | 11 | 23.4% | 23 | 41.1% | 2 | 50.0% | 41 | 29.1% |
| unknown | 2 | 5.9% | 1 | 2.1% |  | 0.0% |  | 0.0% | 3 | 2.1% |
|  | 34 |  | 47 |  | 56 |  | 4 |  | 141 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| % by div | 52.3% |  | 59.5% |  | 51.4% |  |  |  | 55.7% |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2019 player #s | 65 |  | 79 |  | 109 |  |  |  | 253 |  |
| male % |  | 89 |  | 61 |  | 68 |  |  | 81 |  |
| female % |  | 11 |  | 39 |  | 32 |  |  | 19 |  |

Figure - Responses by gender within division

# Response by question

## Communication

1. How did you learn about ESSPA (check all that apply)?

Word of mouth **62%**

ESSPA website 19%

Poster 4%

Other: 15% just under ½ who said the billboard roadside sign

Figure - How did you learn about ESSPA?

Recommendation: This information should be gathered every year for new applicants to monitor what promotion is working the best

* 1. What is the preferred method for ESSPA to keep you informed for individual events (check all that apply)? 316(because of multiple responses)

Email **48%**

Website 17%

Facebook 4%

Posters at diamonds 13%

From your coach/manager 18%

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Figure - Communication preference

Recommendation:

* + - Continue with email communication on all levels (team, division, league wide)
    - For the league or division wide communication ESSPA could consider email with a shortcut to the website & on the website have different areas for communication to the league and each division that can be accessed at later date
    - During the playing season, for members without email ESSPA could consider printouts to be:

- given to coaches with participants name, or

- put in mailboxes at the diamonds for pickup, or

- posted on bulletin boards at the diamonds.

* 1. Do you feel you are involved in decision making for your team/division?

&

* 1. Would you like to be more involved in decision making for your team/division?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Do you feel you are involved in decisions? | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |
| By division | Hirsch | | Hansen | | Brawner | | Div blank | | Total | |
|  | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Yes | 13 | 38.2% | 25 | 53.2% | 39 | 53.4% | 2 | 50.0% | 69 | 49.7% |
| No | 14 | 41.2% | 12 | 25.5% | 11 | 19.0% | 1 | 25.0% | 38 | 26.6% |
| Don't care | 7 | 20.6% | 10 | 21.3% | 15 | 25.9% | 1 | 25.0% | 33 |  |
| blank |  |  |  |  | 1 | 1.7% |  |  | 1 |  |
|  | 34 |  | 47 |  | 56 |  | 4 |  | 141 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Would you like to be more involved? | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| By division | Hirsch | | Hansen | | Brawner | | Div blank | | Total | |
|  | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| No | 28 | 82.4% | 36 | 76.6% | 44 | 79.3% | 3 | 75.0% | 111 | 79.0% |
| Yes | 6 | 17.6% | 10 | 21.3% | 10 | 17.2% | 1 | 25.0% | 27 | 18.9% |
| blank |  |  | 1 | 2.1% | 2 | 3.4% |  |  | 3 |  |
|  | 34 |  | 47 |  | 56 |  | 4 |  | 141 |  |

Figure - Do you feel involved in decisions?

Figure - Would you like to be more involved?

The above tables indicate:

* + - a majority of respondents feel they are involved or don’t care in Hansen & Brawner.
    - Just over half of Hirsch respondents feel they are involved or don’t care
    - But asked who wants to be more involved a majority say NO
    - It appears most people would settle on having decisions made for them; however, there are people who want to be involved

Recommendation:

* + - To reduce the requirement to obtain input when making decisions, at minimum, based on the types of decisions people want to be involved in (see below), have a means in place to enlist input when these types of decision are being made.

What types of decisions do you want to be involved in?

* + - 32 comments by 24 respondents

Hirsch

* + - * Rules (2): 1) Rules for the divisions like for example sub rules; 2) Would like to be more involved in decisions for team/division rules
      * I think that 3-4 players from each team should take a quickie umpires refresher and be the designated umpires. Too many people umpired last year and a number of them were NOT good.
      * Every member should vote on issues like small ball, times, etc not just the team managers.
      * Placement on team participation
      * Would like to be more involved in decisions for team/division structure.
      * Possibly - depends on issues. A simple vote on matters is suffice for having input

Hansen

* + - * Rules (4): 1) Rules; 2) Rules; 3)Rules; 4)Rules
      * small ball/big ball,
      * Number of women on teams.
      * Structure
      * If ESSPA ever decided to join Hansen and Hirsch into one division again I would like to be asked my opinion
      * If I want to be part of the decision making get on the executive otherwise I come to play ball.

Brawner

* + - * Rules (3): 1) Rules; 2) Rule changes if any; 3) Basically that all teams follow the rules and enforce them all the time. There seems to be exceptions to the rule. We either all have to follow them or there is no point.
      * Just coming around to see if anyone has ideas during the season not like when someone comes in to play halfway through the season they get put on the top teams
      * Controlling the egotists who think they have the power and the right to decide where and how an applicant plays
      * Umpire calls on the Diamond during a game.
      * play quality
      * Requirements to play.
      * Choosing the teams needs to be done in more of a fair manner. Presently, for the last several years the Brawner Committee continues to put together all the teams (even for all the coaches that are not on the committee). Under the present system, the committee members choose excellent teams for themselves and very low caliber teams for the coaches not on the committee. A draft, similar or identical to the Hansen & Hirsch Divisions, whereby all coaches draft their own players would eliminate this extremely demoralizing system now in place. There are numerous Brawner players who are disgusted with the ongoing problem, where nothing is ever done to correct the situation.
      * Just to be aware of what decisions are being reviewed in order to have input.

## Structuring teams

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Hirsch | |  |  | Brawner | |
|  | # | % |  |  | # | % |
|  | 34 |  |  |  | 56 |  |
| Play competitively | 29 | 85.3% |  | Play co-ed (set #’s) | 35 | 62.5% |
| Play mixed (no set #) | 12 | 35.3% |  | Play competitively | 31 | 55.4% |
| Play co-ed (set #’s) | 5 | 14.7% |  | Play mixed (no set #) | 24 | 42.9% |
| Play for enjoyment | 6 | 17.6% |  | Play for enjoyment | 21 | 37.5% |
| Play on a men’s team | 5 | 14.7% |  | Play on a men’s team | 2 | 3.6% |
|  | 57 |  |  |  | 113 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Hansen | |  |  | **OVERALL** | |
|  | # | % |  | | # | % |
|  | 47 |  |  |  | 137 |  |
| Play competitively | 26 | 55.3% |  | Play competitively | 86 | 62.8% |
| Play mixed (no set #) | 25 | 53.2% |  | Play co-ed (set #’s) | 61 | 44.5% |
| Play for enjoyment | 22 | 46.8% |  | Play mixed (no set #) | 61 | 44.5% |
| Play co-ed (set #’s) | 21 | 44.7% |  | Play for enjoyment | 49 | 35.8% |
| Play on a men’s team | 2 | 4.3% |  | Play on a men’s team | 9 | 6.6% |
|  | 96 |  |  |  | 266 |  |

Figure - Structuring Teams

Additional comments about team structure from open ended questions (BY DIVISION):

Hirsch

* (6) Minimum # of women on each team/field; 1) minimum of 1 female on the field; 2) The Hirsh division needs to have more females playing on each team. It would be nice to a mandatory 3 females on the field with 6 males; 3) nice to have the same number of women on each team; 4) the game does not become fun if you play with players or against teams that are much stronger / weaker than the team you are on. I believe that teams should be equal with players on the field. If you are on a mixed team then there should be a set # of minimum players that have to play or you play short. Example would be having a minimum of 1 female on the field to be able to play 10 players; 45) Each team should be mandatory to have at least 3 females on the field at one time; 6) I enjoyed playing in the Hirsch League, as long as it didn't get too serious. My only concern would be the situations when there were an uneven number of women on each team - I know it is difficult to manage but it would be nice to have the same number of women on each team if at all possible.
* (1) Don't care about the number of females as long as they are competitive not just on the team because their husband is.
* (3) - Balance between competition and enjoyment.
* (1) - Hirsch should be men only and the females can play in Hansen.
* (2) Co-ed keeps the testosterone down and makes games more enjoyable; tones the language down a bit

Hansen – 6 individuals made the below

* Changing the structure to be more inclusive of women in the more competitive divisions.
* even # would make teams more balanced
* I like to play with players that have some skill level regardless if they are women or men.
* I like to be/play the best I can; against & with fairly comparable players & teams.
* I played in Hansen Division for the first time last year, moved down from Hirsh. I did not enjoy it at all. To many women on the teams that are not good enough and is too much of a fun league. I have nothing against females because some of the men are worst! Perhaps another division between Hirsh and Hansen should be considered which could be more competitive???
* I enjoy a competitive structure as I find it more challenging and rewarding than just playing for enjoyment. I have zero interest and get zero satisfaction from winning a baseball game. I want to play on teams of all genders. I have played only in Hirsch since coming to the league eight years ago. I like the fact that the teams are picked for balance and change every year. In each year any team can win at any time. I also like to have women in the league. At the end of the day I am there for the opportunity to play some ball.
* I enjoy the competitiveness of the sport. I want to keep my skills to a level where I can play in tournaments.

Brawner – 9 individuals made the below comments

* I have a full time career and a member of the "sandwich" generation so am busy with serious stuff all the time, so I loved the Wednesday noon drop in games that were so much less serious than the league, even though I was in the lowest division. I couldn't care less who is in first versus last place. Maybe we could have teams that don't even want to keep score and just want to play for pure fun play each other.
* Even numbers of female/male players as well as older players (over 80) in Brawner will make play more competitive.
* I have seen other teams stacking their teams and bringing players in later in the season.
* There will always be personality conflicts; however, avoiding them if possible is preferred
* team coaches/exec should not be involved in the formation of the actual teams. In other words there should be a better method of forming the teams to ensure balanced competitiveness in Brawner. This has not been the case for a number of years. This has been a concern expressed by many league members.
* Stacking of teams. I don't feel that year after year the same players are playing together. I can see a person wanting to play with a friend, but I think that they should only be permitted to identify one player they would like to play.
* Get your fucking egos in check. If a player wants to play in a certain division then don't prevent it
* An open draft should be just that "no couples" only available as a package deal.
* you shouldn't be allowed to add a late registrant to your team who hits the ball over the fence in Brawner.
* After playing for so many years on mens' teams, I still prefer the competitive nature of just playing with the guys; however, I am quite willing now to play at my level. (Brawner).
* "Balanced competitiveness" doesn't exist in Brawner because there is "no draft". The Committee just chooses teams for all the coaches (the coaches don't get to choose their own players via a "draft"). It is a completely ridiculous situation to continue having the existing Brawner Committee members choose the teams for everyone when they don't do it fairly (Just check the standings & final results for last season to confirm this). Meeting & playing with different players every season is an excellent idea, but the coaches need to choose their "own" teams, not have teams chosen for them. Entering as an individual is good, as long as there is a system in place (a draft whereby each coach chooses their own players - not being on a team that has been selectively chosen to favor the Brawner Committee members' teams & create weak teams with the others who have virtually zero chance of winning games. The Brawner Division absolutely needs a "true draft" like in Hansen & Hirsch. Many Brawner players are moving to Hansen this year, to avoid being "dumped on" again by the existing Brawner Committee members.

The above tables indicate:

* Playing competitively is high on almost everyone’s priority
* Hirsch players are dominantly interested in competitiveness
* Hansen players are very close in order of interest in competition, mixed, enjoyment & co-ed
* Brawner players are in favor of co-ed and competitiveness
* It appears that most people think co-ed set #’s means a minimum number of women on the field

Brenda’s Comments:

* Keeping teams fair is very difficult. They may start out fair, but injuries and how some people improve over the season can make it look like teams are stacked. When someone starts mid-season, they are supposed to be evaluated, play a game or two in a division (which does not always provide an opportunity to show strengths/weaknesses) and then placed on a team thru team leader negotiation of each teams need.
* Brawner sometimes gets a player that has the skill to play in Hansen but for personality reasons is not selected in Hansen. Perhaps this should be addressed.

Recommendations:

* Hirsch should base team structure on individual ability and review other comments to decide if women should be evenly spaced across teams and on the field
* Hansen should look at other comments before deciding whether to go mixed or co-ed with fixed number of women on the field
* Brawner should go co-ed and look at other comments to decide if more senior men should be evened out over the teams and/or be allowed to hit the small ball/senior bat and/or have different rules for getting on base to conserve runners (i.e. If the batted ball hits the grass the runner goes to first)
* How players are added to teams after the league starts should be reviewed, clearly documented and parity enforced
* Could consider:
  + a daytime fun league (no score keeping) and/or
  + a men’s only draft division (a place for older Cuthbertson players to transition).

## Thinking of day time playing and some options/possibilities

* 1. Are you able to play weekdays? 37%
  2. I have participated in Wednesday day league (Currently Wednesdays 11 am to 1 pm, drop-in & make up teams). 22%
  3. I am interested in drop-in day league play on more days. 17%
  4. I would be interested in a day league division with organized teams. 17%
  5. Would you prefer drop in day league be just before the regular night league in order to facilitate a warm up for the night league? 7%
  6. Would you prefer an organized day league division be just before the regular night league in order to facilitate socializing after while watching the night games? 0
  7. Other ideas: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

* There was not a lot of interest; however, a cross reference analysis by division and age may provide some further insight.

Recommendations:

* Conduct a cross reference analysis by division and age over the winter to see if some daytime options should be offered.

## The small ball (11” as opposed to the 13”)

This was optional for ladies to hit in Brawner last year. The small ball is also used in some mixed tournaments and in lady’s tournaments. While Brawner players found there was some transition getting used to the small ball it was considered a success. Thinking of the small ball would you like it to be available for ladies to hit in your division:

Comments:

Hansen: 1) Changing to the women's ball for women as is done is almost all co-ed tournaments; 2) Re "small ball": My opposition to small ball in Hansen Div is strictly a safety issue. Quite a few of the men and some of the women are able to throw a regular ball with considerable speed. The "small ball" is not much bigger than a baseball so it is not unreasonable to think that ball could be thrown even harder. If Hansen considers also going with a small ball then batting helmets should be made mandatory for all baserunners (and women from home).



Figure 7 - Small Ball

The above tables indicate:

* A majority of players replied yes over no to the small ball in all divisions
* Hansen was the only division that had more “Don’t care” than “Yes”
* Brawner was a resounding “Yes” for the small ball, a testament to its success in 2019
* Females were more strongly in favor of the small ball than males

Comments:

* Brawner’s resounding “Yes” after the initial hesitancy in 2019 shows how well they adapted
* Review other comments to determine if perhaps Brawner should trial allowing older male players an option to hit the small ball

Recommendation

* Use the small ball in all drafted divisions and allow women the choice to hit small or big

## What do you like/enjoy about playing in ESSPA?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Centrally located diamonds | 149 | 91.4% |
| Love of the game | 146 | 89.5% |
| Quality Diamonds | 144 | 88.3% |
| To socialize after the game | 140 | 85.9% |
| Access to washrooms | 117 | 71.8% |
| To socialize during the game | 115 | 70.5% |
| Meet people because of draft | 108 | 66.2% |
| Reliable organization | 104 | 63.8% |
| Enter as an individual instead | 93 | 57.0% |
| Balanced competitiveness | 87 | 53.4% |
| Yearend banquet | 58 | 35.6% |
| Spring Mixer | 35 | 21.5% |

Figure - What do you like about ESSPA?

Other comments that were about what they liked:

* (Ha) Continually learn to play better.
* (Hi) I find it's a lot like Cheers the more I go I find everyone knows my name.
* (Ha) I met many players who played for enjoyment, and had little care about winning or losing games.
* (Ha) I don't mind the Draft as long as I can play with my husband.

The above table indicates:

* Central location, love of the game, quality diamonds and to socialize after the games are most enjoyed with approx. 85-91% of respondents selecting these
* Access to washrooms, socialize during the game, meeting people and reliable organization are moderately enjoyed with approx. 64-72%of respondents selecting these
* Ability to enter as an individual and balanced competitiveness are less enjoyed with approx., 53-57% of respondents selecting these.
* The social functions were the least enjoyed, which does not make them unimportant, just less enjoyed relative to the other items

Analysis:

* As a league we have a lot to be proud of and we owe a huge appreciation to the founding members who obtained our central location and the members who were instrumental (like Don Hussey) in obtaining grants and coordinating the building of Ulmer House and our annex.

Summary:

* The responses provide some input into how we can promote our league and how we might amend this question in future surveys.

Recommendations:

* Central location, quality diamonds, a covered location with seating to socialize after the games, access to washrooms and the meeting more people and knowing people on the other teams because of the draft should be used to promote our league
* For our next survey:
  + Add a scale of 1-5 for importance
  + include in the list:
    - Play for the enjoyment of the game
    - Play to win
    - Can be drafted with a significant other to play on the same team
  + remove from the list:
    - Love of the game as this applies to anywhere you play the game and not specifically to ESSPA

## Should social fees be part of membership fees?



Figure - Social Fees

The above tables indicate:

* The no’s are in the majority by only 2 votes in Hirsch and 4 votes in Hansen.
* The yes is in the majority by only 4 votes in Brawner.
* Females want the social fees more than the males (done in a separate chart)

Analysis/Comments/Things considered:

* For the drafted divisions it appears we have an almost 50/50 chance of offending about 37% of our membership by going either way
* The Cuthbertson survey response was 1 yes, 15 no and 5 don’t care of 21 respondents of 93 members. With a 22.6% (21/93) response rate should 15 of 93 or 16% of Cuthbertson members influence us to make a change?
* ESSPA’s past policy, which has been a bone of contention for some members, has been that members who could not attend the banquet could not give their (paid for) ticket to someone else to attend (for example to a spouse of a team mate who is attending). If this policy were changed would it make a difference?
* Should we consider having optional social fees so that those who prepaid get in free and others have to pay? How could this be managed?
* If Cuthbertson is managed completely differently (i.e. team fees as opposed to individual fees) is there a way to manage optional social fees for Cuthbertson or would we simply say they can pay to attend?

Summary:

* For the drafted divisions there is not a strong vote for or against with a less than 3% total difference of ‘no’ over ‘yes’.
* For Cuthbertson there is a strong ‘no’ vote but a small % of membership
* For the drafted divisions there is a strong importance of socializing after the games.

Recommendation

* For ease of management we recommend social fees not be included in membership fees.
* If we choose to organize a social function people would pay if they wished to attend.
* Although each division manages their own socialization after games we may consider how or if we should augment or assist in this.

## What would improve your experience playing in ESSPA?

## Hirsch

– 19 comments from 13 individuals

Hirsch comments about **Harmony**, **Substitution – team player, Substitution- runner** and **Other rules** from this & other open ended questions:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Harmony (5)** | **Substitutions - player (3)** | **Other rules (7)** |
| What I have no time for is the odd individual who causes trouble year in and year out by having several verbal altercations each season. By keeping these players, we lose one to five players each year who never come back. | Substitution rules need to be set in play specifically for our divisions/ with parameters pertaining to age and injury. | Review of the rules on a yearly basis would be good to see what works and what does not. |
| Do not like seeing people do off of the deep end. | If you are short a female, an automatic out must be taken. (co-ed rule) | Get rid of **intentional walk** or at least need 2 strikes to walk someone, not 1 strike. |
| *Should* remain enjoyable (i.e., no complaining, arguing, etc.) | A lady must substitute for a lady only. A male must substitute for a male only. | It would be better to stick to a pre-determined **playoff schedule** subject only to rainouts. When playoff games are continually changed at the last minute, scheduling conflicts arise and players are unavailable to play in important games. |
| As long as it doesn't get stupid and coach's or players are yelling at or berating teammates. I have not time for that! There should be an ejection policy regarding this. | Makes changes to clarify substitution between divisions, set out clear rules of substitution | Having all managers/coaches knowing rules which would result in fewer arguments. Too many times basic rules were ignored - baserunner interference, run scoring on 3rd out, illegal pitches, infield fly just to name a few. |
| We need to support and enforce rules as laid out by the league. Verbal abuse and threats | **Substitutions – runner (2)**  **II**  **II**  **V** | Neutral **umpires** would be better (2 volunteer players from teams not playing). |
|  | If a batter needs a runner due to injury they have option to try making it to first base on their hit or just getting the runner from home plate. It is hard to stop a habit of years of playing and adjust to this rule. Are they referring to the habit to run even though they have asked for a runner? | Review rules governing "Safe Line/Base", move base runner line closer to first, etc. |
|  | Playing a team claiming to have 3 to 6 injuries in a game is a nightmare. How do you substitute fairly? Answer each scenario, and then set your rules. | Minimum height on **pitches** 6' no maximum height. |
|  |  | enforce the 12 foot **pitch rule** |
|  |  | let the teams play-out the 7 inning game in the first time slot..........( a suggestion ) in a high scoring / long running game, have the batters start with a 1 and 1 count for the last inning or even the last 2 or 3 innings if it’s clear that the game is going to go over the time limit. |

This comment from a person, who indicated they played in Hirsch, seems like it may have been meant for Brawner: Allow players over 80 to use the small ball, or senior bats (121 bpm). No substitute runners from home. When the batter hits the ball, if it is not caught in the outfield or rolls onto the grass the batter advances to first base, where a substitute runner can be put in place. This will save on your runners as they won't be used if the ball does not make it out of the infield, or a possible single being turned into a triple due to bad throws. This works very well in other leagues. Saves on substitute runners running hard causing injuries for a weak hit ball.

Other Hirsch comments not related to harmony or rules:

* There needs to be a clear progression from division to division
* Enforce a draft in the Cuthbertson to achieve true competition
* (4) Positive: I am grateful for the time and efforts of the executive, the coordinators and the coaches; Thanks for taking the time to improve the league. For the most part it works very well as it is. I also like the current home/away uniform as we have uniforms from the beginning of the season; Had a great team and season last year and look forward to 2020!; Can't think of anything; I enjoy it as is.
* (2) Cut the grass shorter; To find some sort of compromise on how high the length of grass should be kept in the outfield. These diamonds are by far the longest cut compared to any other playing field in the area and even where I have played in the USA states. Deep grass makes it harder to initiate quick movements and is straining on the knees at times plus it can kill the ball dead when it is a grounder.
* For everyone to just have fun and play

## Hansen

Hansen comments about **Co-ed**, **Substitution – team player, Substitution- runner** from this & other open ended questions:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Co-ed (4) | Substitution - player (2) | Other rules (6) |
| If you have a co-ed team there should ALWAYS be a minimum of women on the field. | Pick up equal caliber males for men Spares and equal caliber females for women Spares in all Divisions from Hirsch downwards. | I think that all players in all divisions should be able to at least run to first base before getting a sub. |
| set a minimum limit for woman - not per team but actually playing on the field. | Spares should be same gender. | Require only persons that have full knowledge of the Current Rules and Division Specific Exceptions, to **Umpire**. |
| move to a "true" co-ed style 7-3 | **Substitutions – runner (1)**  **II**  **II**  **V** | Minimize Division Specific Exceptions! |
| If you play co-ed you know you will be played against the same number of men and women as you not teams picking up spares that are men with one or no women. | Runners for others from first base should be able to run more than twice per game. | Provide Rules Training Sessions for anyone that will be **Umpiring**. |
| 3) 3 women on the field |  | Rules need to be clearly defined, not so ambiguous, like the **lead off rule**. |
|  |  | **Lead off** from first can proceed as soon as the ball crosses the plate. |
|  |  | It would be good if all teams could follow the rules, no matter the situation of the game. |

Long winded rule comment & my comment:

* The rules are very unfair to women, and that could be changed by adopting some rule changes that give them an equal chance as men. For example, we tend to use the 150 foot mark (46 m) as the limit of most women's hitting distance. If you apply the simple geometry, that means a field of 10 is protecting an area of on average 166 square meters each (1660 m2). When a man is batting, the 10 fielders are protecting a field (230 feet distance, 70 m) of on average 385 square meters each (3850 m2). In other words, the 10 fielders have to cover more than twice the area as when a woman is batting. Explains why men get on base more. and obviously not fair to women. Why not have fewer fielders when women are batting, say by two less? Rule changes like this would make having women on the team more attractive, since they could actually start producing runs at rates equal to men. We could also use the 150 foot line as automatic home run for women! We have a defacto one for men, why not for women? Comment: The area covered is actually true of any weaker/stronger batter. Fewer fielders are not practical when weaker & stronger batters often alternate in the lineup unless perhaps you move 2 fielders to the fence. Perhaps consider a ball landing on the grass past the 150 foot line as an automatic double for some players.

Other Hansen comments not related to co-ed or rules:

* Positive (5): Just wish to express my appreciation to the Board and their willingness to serve and their desire to make the ESSPA the best it can be!; Didn't hear many complaints from my teammates; Looking forward to spring; I was looking for fun. I really enjoyed last year and I'm looking forward to another good season.; Happy with things as is
* Harmony comments (3): 1) There should just be a firm, set rule that there is no arguing with an umpire. Period. If they have an issue it needs to be brought up after the game by the team captains. Umps are not perfect and may miss a call. In the name of good sportsmanship, if the ump misses a call his/her team should make the correction then and there. If they don't then the call stands. 2) Stop the constant fighting and stealing players between Hirsch and Hansen. 3) Less petty bickering between teams & divisions to create more enjoyment in ESSPA.
* Umpires (2): 1) better umpires. 2) At times the "self" umpiring system can be frustrating. I don't feel people who are not qualified to Ump should be forced (or allowed) to ump. Personally I do not feel confident being asked to do so and i help my team in other ways (coaching bases or keeping score)
* Perhaps another division between Hirsh and Hansen should be considered which could be more competitive
* Improve backstops and higher fences by dugouts so fouls don't go out so often which really slow down the game.
* Provide a feature to allow Players to download their Team Schedule into the Calendar App on their Smartphone (for the Majority of us that use them to plan our time. eg. Away/other events...)
* Better coaches
* Don't take away the Social part of the league. New players may not think it's important but once you've been in the league for a couple of years you really appreciate this aspect of it.
* Increase the disparity between female and male players. Females are too often catcher and right field.
* It is great having a beer or two after the game but there should be no one sitting at the tables all night getting loaded.
* When I played in Calgary we had a few double headers during the season then only play one night the following week I liked that.

## Brawner

Brawner comments about **Substitution – team player, Substitution- runner,** **Ability** and **Other rules** from this & other open ended questions:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Substitution - player (3) | Ability (5) | Other rules (1) |
|  |  |  |
| Having a proper spare list where those who wish to spare rotate through. I feel there is too much cherry picking of subs, as well as some players getting to play 3, 4 or more games some weeks whereas most of us only play 2. We all pay the same fees | Eliminate the players that can no longer play. If you cannot run, catch, hit or throw the ball you should not play. Are you really playing anymore? | Look at **rain out** rules and make up games; last year was horrible for the weather |
| I hate that some team leaders will bend the rules to stack their team, or use a ringer. | If you cannot run, catch or hit you need to know when to quit. | Definitely get back to allowing a runner from home in the Brawner division. I do not buy the argument about this as an abuse of healthy runners. |
| If it is a mixed team there has to be set rules on minimum women on each team otherwise they pick up men to fill those positions. Also it should be same caliber of player filling in for missing player. Some team coaches follow this to keep it even but others do not as they must win. | Playing with players that can at least run to first. |  |
| **Substitutions – runner (4)**  **II**  **II**  **V** | tell the fools who can't run or walk or catch or throw to find another activity like cribbage or swimming or whatever |  |
| The substitution should be a person of similar ability and gender | I love playing ball for fun and competitiveness but when you are playing with players that can't run, catch or bat it does get vary frustrating. Some of us that are capable of running are always running for someone who can't and we are getting older so we are getting injures from doing this and only want to run for ourselves. If this does not change you will get people wanting to move up to better quality of players so they don't have to kill themselves running for others or covering in field for them. |  |
| Runner substitution is abused. It's supposed to be for injuries only, not to take advantage by putting a faster runner in for a slow one. There must be a way to address this other than expecting everyone to be honorable |  |  |
| The rule that you must run to 1st base is a must. Otherwise capable people that are slow runners get a Fast runner to 1st base and they are safe. |  |  |
| A player who has a courtesy runner cannot then later run for someone else. |  |  |

Other Brawner comments not related to the above:

* Get the people who think they know what is best for everyone under control
* An improvement would be if players were more open to **switching up positions**. By default, age or injury/physical disability some prime positions are claimed by players. This seniority approach isn't really for others that want to try/share/play infield versus outfield.
* We pay the same to play and should get to play **equal innings**.
* Make Brawner less competitive.
* Possibly allowing **non playing coaches or assistant coaches** for those players that do not have the physical ability to play but would still like the social atmosphere and to be able to share their ball knowledge!
* In the playoffs, I would prefer if everyone could just play more games, rather than anyone get knocked out due to competitiveness.
* I find there is still too much **smoking** even though there are no smoking signs.

BLANK DIVISION

* Clarify the infield fly rule: is the rover an infielder for an infield fly.

Comments

Analysis

Recommendations

## About you

* 1. Where were you registered at end of 2019?
  + Refer to Figure 1.
  + There were 4 responses that were blank for division registered in. In our question regarding division registered in, we did not include an option for spares or day league. These blanks may be spares or day league members or they may have simply missed selecting a division.
  1. Which divisions did you sub in in the 2019 season (check all that apply)? 58 (subbing multiple divisions)
     + Cuthbertson - 7
     + Hirsch - 15
     + Hansen - 21
     + Brawner – 26

Sub within the same division 31

Brawner to Hansen 7

Hansen to Hirsch 2

Hirsch to Cuthbertson 6

Figure - Player substitutions

The above analysis of substitutions in different divisions indicates there are a relatively small number of players (15) who actually subbed in a different division.

A review of rules, which if the same across divisions could ease that substitution may be beneficial

* 1. As of the 2019 season, how many years have you played with ESSPA?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yrs played | # | % |
| 1 | 20 | 13.7% |
| 2-4 | 34 | 24.7% |
| 5-7 | 36 | 24.7% |
| 8-10 | 20 | 13.7% |
| 10+ | 34 | 23.3% |
|  | 146 | 100.0% |

Figure 11 - Years played

* 1. Age



Figure - Age

* 1. Gender - 141
     + Male - 97
     + Female - 41
     + Prefer not to say –3

Figure - Gender

## Other comments

The following comments did not fall into any of the above categories:

Hirsch

* Enforce a draft in the Cuthbertson to achieve true competition
* Comments **about beer** were made in the survey intro, but no questions about beer, I am assuming it's about consumption, and how much consumption?
* Don't keep wasting money by buying new **uniforms** for Hirsch/Hansen/Brawner so frequently, the "50 Classics" in Cuthbertson had their white uniforms in service for 10 years plus, that I and others can verify, "Destiny" are still wearing their jersey's ( 12 yrs. plus ).

Hansen

* I am competitive and I am not ready to play just for the fun of it. I don't care how many men or women are on the team. Still **want to have fun** though.
* **Happy** with things as is
* I played in ESSPA from 2007 to 2015. I serviced on the board for 6 or the 8 years. After the 2015 season I decided to go play EAMSPA as I no longer enjoyed ESSPA and the Hirsch Division. I enjoyed the next 3 years playing with my son. In 2019, he moved to St. Albert to form a men's team and my friend convinced me to come back as Hansen Division had been formed and it was fun. I was looking for fun. I really **enjoyed** last year and I'm looking forward to another good season.
* **Enjoy** playing in Hansen Division

Brawner

* There are participants that seem to forget that Brawner is a recreational league and not a competitive one.
* I enjoy the social aspect but I like to see effort and people who are playing giving you a chance to win. Nothing worse than going out there twice a week and knowing you have no chance to win unless you can find someone worse!
* We need to go back to the Yearend Banquet. The weather in Alberta is too risky. I am not saying there cannot be an outdoor activity throughout the summer but just not yearend as it gets too late to count on weather. I miss the hall banquet to get dressed up and dance. It can be done at a reasonable cost you just need to have good organizers.
* Existing rules / substitution rules are fine as long as the teams are formed in a fair & democratic fashion.
* Provide **training** to board members. Provide training to team coaches/managers and division coordinators (i.e. get together and review rules of conduct, how to manage conflict/difficult players, how to treat all team members fairly, share ways to manage line-ups, how to involve your team in decision making, share different coaching styles for different types of players)
* It's nice to have a **beverage** after the game, but I have seen too many instances where players drive away impaired. It's only a matter of time before there is an accident or suspension. Sometimes I have even felt like calling the police to watch for players leaving impaired. Very Sad
* Reconsider runner from home for Brawner teams.

Positive feedback from Brawner

* Keep up the good work.
* I greatly appreciate all the volunteer hours that so many put into this league to make it such a success. I especially enjoy socializing after the games and getting to know the players.
* I am satisfied with ESSPA as is.
* Overall it was generally fair and fun.
* Ok as is
* Great league!
* Thank you to Bill and the other volunteers for their commitment and great work last year!