

Ottawa Tech Mixed Softball League Summary—2013

*Prepared by Daniel Cayouette
President
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Mandate of the Club

The mandate of the Ottawa Tech Softball League is to provide the opportunity for adults to play softball with colleagues in an organized league each summer.

League Executive for 2013

Name	Title
Daniel Cayouette	President
Tim Dall	Vice President
Ian Holden	Scheduler, Commissioner, Website Management
Darryl Ryan	Treasurer
Brian Taylor	Registrar
Marc Gauthier	Equipment Manager
Leigh Thorpe	Past President

Mission of the Executive

The mission of the League Executive is to manage league operations with a goal towards maximizing the fun elements for those participating in the league. As required, the League Executive will make decisions for the benefit of the majority in league operations.

Membership

During the 2013 season, we had 13 teams - down from 15 teams in 2012 and 2011, down from 16 in 2010.

The Season In Review

1. This was not a year with many changes.
2. We continued our affiliation with NSA Canada primarily to get indemnity insurance for the executive and for the playing ground owners (Federal Government). The NSA fee was \$95 per team. For the team fees we paid, we additionally received indemnity insurance for the team captains and additional health insurance for all participants. For 2/3 of the team fee, we received credits for NSA prizes which we used to create team prize packs at the end of the season. We received our NSA prizes very late after the season had ended - we need to ensure this does not happen next year.

3. This was our third year where the Carling landlord was the Federal Government (PWGSC) at no charge. The key enabler was the support from Ciena as a key tenant of the campus – many thanks to Al Lounsbury for making this happen. Another enabler was the indemnity insurance from NSA for the grounds. We used the same team and individual PWGSC indemnity forms.
4. We continued the practice of having the Captains Meeting close to the end of registration. This allows us to make more concrete decisions before and at the meeting since we know the size of the league. We announced in the meeting invitation that a number of decisions would be made at the meeting and made the attendance of a team representative mandatory.
5. We changed to receiving team payments electronically this year as opposed to cheques. Once established, this should be easier for next year.
6. Changes from 2011 were continued:
 - a. Ump your own team
 - b. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday time 4:45 or 6:15 continued to be used
 - c. No paid umpers for playoffs
 - d. Playoffs moved from the weekend to during the week - as a second mini-season.
 - e. One tier for regular season games but with the playoff being split into three divisions, played as a round robin.
 - f. Schedules for teams catered, if possible, to any timing preference they may have indicated at registration (e.g. preference to start at 6:15)
7. With 13 teams as opposed to 15, the playoffs essentially become a second season (round robin) with teams that were closer in strength.
8. The sportsmanship tracking continued to provide information to the executives on the day-to-day operations of the league without having to attend every game.
9. We did not have any incidents this year, which was wonderful! This makes it three years in a row.
10. Note - this is from last year - not sure how many forfeits in 2013. #####There were a significant number of forfeits this year (12). One team had 6 and another had 3. This may lead to fewer teams for next year.
11. For end of year prizes, each team was provided prizes from NSA. Each team could then distribute amongst themselves however they wished. As we started in 2012, to enable more of the NSA prizes to go to each team, we did not distribute trophies to the winners.
12. Our bank account continues to be at the Royal Bank under the name “Ottawa Tech Mixed Softball League.” The current four officers with signing authority on the account are Daniel Cayouette, Darryl Ryan, Ian Holden and Leigh Thorpe.

Equipment

Legacy equipment

Since 2009, the league has only used the two diamonds at Carling Place (3500 Carling Ave.) and provides two sets of game equipment in the bins located at the diamonds. There are also some first aid kits in the bins although we continue to encourage each of the teams to provide their own.

We have two equipment bins at the Carling East diamond and one at the Carling West diamond.

Each captain also has a set of equipment (bases, bats, mask) that was distributed May 2011.

New equipment

No new equipment was ordered for the 2013 season, other than sufficient game balls. For the 2013 season our game ball continued to be 375 lb. maximum compression and .47 COR.

We haven't ordered new bats since there are so many makes and varieties available, combined with players having their own personal preferences. Most teams provide their own team bats using the league equipment to augment as appropriate.

Bin Locks

As in 2013, there were a few issues with the lock on the bins, and at least one of them was replaced (Thanks, Marc!).

Table 1: Annual Projected Budget and Actual Spending**Starting Balance: \$2,585.78**

Expenses	2013 Budget	2013 Actual	Variance
Equipment	570.00	593.25	-23.25
Diamonds	0.00	0.00	0.00
Prizes	1100.00	980.90	119.10
Playoffs	0.00	0.00	0.00
Exec	300.00	130.52	169.48
Web Hosting	205.00	201.14	3.86
NSA Fee	1235.00	1235.00	0.00
Misc	50.00	0.00	50.00
Total	3460.00	3140.81	319.19

Income	2012 Budget	2012 Actual	Variance
Fees (\$225 * 13)	\$2925.00	\$2925.00	0.00
Balance:	\$2050.78	\$2369.97	-319.19

Budget Summary and Assumptions

We began 2013 with a balance of \$2585.78 in the League's account and an objective of ending the year with \$2050.78. We have completed the year with a budget surplus of \$319.19 and a balance of \$2369.97.

How much to have in the League's account between seasons depends mainly on 2 main factors:

- a) ordering balls for the next season which we may need to do before fees are collected (\$600)
- b) uncertainty of whether the league will need to use City diamonds in the future and pay for them before we get fees from the teams and/or before teams register to play for the next season (\$1200-\$2000).

Spending was in line with the budget approved at the captains meeting. The variance was essentially that we spent less on prizes and the exec than planned.

Discussion of budget entries

The following will help explain the financials for 2013, showing what we budgeted versus what we actually spent (Table 1).

Equipment

In 2013 the only equipment expenditure was balls for the season and a replacement lock on the east

bin, which had to be replaced because of malfunction. We did not need to replenish our first aid kits.

Diamonds

For the sixth consecutive year, we have solely used the diamonds located at Carling Place, which were available to us with no cost.

Prizes

NSA Canada provides \$60 of the NSA team registration fee (\$95) back in prizes. Delivery costs for NSA prizes cannot be paid using \$60 portion of NSA team fees, so this will always be an additional expense. We also bought additional prizes for the teams to distribute to their players as opposed to trophies.

Playoffs

Since we changed the format of the playoffs, we did not have to run a playoff weekend. We did not use paid umpires for playoffs, so this expense was avoided.

Exec

This category is used to cover meals for the executive associated with organizing activities.

Web Hosting:

The league web site is hosted through SibName.com. The address of the website is <http://otttechsoftball.org>

NSA Fees:

Affiliation with NSA costs \$95 per team. The main benefit to us from affiliation is liability and health insurance. Sixty dollars of the fee was converted to prizes at the end of the season.

Miscellaneous:

There were no miscellaneous expenses this year although we had budgeted for \$50.

Team Fees:

Teams were charged \$130 each to help cover league costs plus the \$95 NSA team fee for a total collection per team of \$225. For comparison, the 2012 fee was \$225 per team and the 2011 fee was \$250 per team.

Future Plans, Improvements & Lessons Learned

This section is meant to capture thoughts or suggestions for future seasons.

1. As with any off-season period, members of the exec will consider their ability to continue in a role.

We always welcome members of the league who would like to volunteer their time and/or expertise in the organizing and operation of the league.

2. We need input from the team captains on diamonds: Should we stay or should we go (to City Diamonds)?
 - **On the go side:** The Carling Place diamonds lack a number of amenities that we would get at city diamonds (e.g. benches, fences). Having teams pay more to participate may stop teams from signing up for little money and then forfeiting games since the cost is so low. At some point we are likely going to have to return to city diamonds if we continue so why not start the move sooner rather than later?
 - If we go to City diamonds, we will likely lose flexibility in scheduling time slots for diamonds. We do not know what timeslots would be available. It is also likely that getting 6pm to 8pm slots would be relatively difficult.
 - A variation of this decision is that we can work on booking city diamonds in parallel to getting ok from PWGSC and cancel our city bookings if we get approval for Carling Place.
 - Another variation is that we could use both Carling place and City diamonds.
 - Using city diamonds will require the league to distribute the balls at season start and teams to provide bases and bats which were distributed to the current teams in 2012.
 - Each year that we do not do this move to the City diamonds means another year that we won't get familiar with the current City process and its options.
 - **On the stay side:** Status Quo. There is a higher risk of not being able to use the Carling Place diamonds this year. The key will be for Ciena as a tenant to sponsor our usage of the diamonds.
 - There is uncertainty on when and if this agreement between Ciena and PWGSC can be secured. Need to review with Al Lounsbury (Ciena).
 - This is tempered with the current situation that DND staff have not started to populate the campus (another year away) and that Ciena is planning to continue to at Carling Place for 5 more years and Ciena is ready to continue to sponsor our usage of the diamonds.
 - If we stay at Carling, there are some scheduling items that should be discussed. Note that this level of flexibility will not likely be available if we go to City diamonds

- Games should not be scheduled to continue past 7:30 pm after Labor Day. It gets dark too quickly, especially on grey days, to play safely. Evening games should be scheduled to start no later than 6:00 pm if games are to be played past Labor Day. As we had less teams in 2013 compared to 2012, this wasn't as much of an issue in 2013.
3. We are changing web site host providers from Sibername to Hostpapa. The reason for the change was a lack of satisfaction with the previous ISP response to issues and high cost. Web site move shall be completed by end of January, well in advance of the 2014 season planning beginning. The web site name will not change.
 4. Buying bats to put in the 2 Carling Place bins. We will bring this forward to the Captains meeting to vote on whether getting 2 new bats per bin would have sufficient support and value. We would need to identify a budget for this and a volunteer to get this done if needed.

There are a number of risks on this item:

- a) Bats are a tough thing to buy due to various weight and feel.
 - b) Bats can cost \$100 to \$300 each.
 - c) A lot of people have access to the bins and the risk of theft of a new bat is there. That needs to be considered by the captains for their decision on this as it is their money.
5. At the captains meeting, we need to review how much risk they want to continue to mitigate with respect to how much balance to keep in the League's bank account. The risks identified above around equipment costs and uncertainty of using City diamonds and their associated costs that need to be disbursed before team registration/payments.
 6. We will make a renewed commitment to get the prizes delivered much sooner than previously.
 - a) We need to get feedback from the teams on what we should get and we need to get this done at the captains meeting.
 - b) We need to order the prizes from NSA as soon as we have payed our NSA fees so that we have a better chance to get the items we want at the best prices.
 - c) We need to get the order delivered no later than July 15.
 7. The number of forfeits was way down in 2013 compared to prior years. We will continue to recommend that if a team doesn't have the solid 15 committed members by the appropriate pre-season deadline, we do not let the team continue. Modifying the schedules after the season has begun is too much work, unless you are simply going to forfeit all the games the team was to play.
 8. The playoff and regular season checklist and workflow should be reviewed and updated. We should likely use a Wiki such as wikispaces.com to enable multiple people to easily edit these documents. But having it in some form is necessary to ensure deadlines or actions aren't missed.
 9. The commissioner should review NSA Canada's rules to see if there are ones we should adopt. Specifically, these should be considered to add as league rules:

- a) One was a ruling that a player could not be tagged out on a play at the plate, that is, that the only play for the defense was to have control of the ball and touch the plate.
 - b) As we play fast pitch rules, except for the pitching, the other item is a difference between foul tips between Fast Pitch and SloPitch. SloPitch no longer requires an arc be involved in the flight of the ball to determine if a foul tip has occurred.
10. The vice-president will update the code of discipline with the changes approved at the 2011 captain meeting.
11. For the exec, we should identify an email distribution that gets a copy of each of the sportsmanship comments.