

Ottawa Tech Mixed Softball League Summary—2012

*Prepared by Daniel Cayouette
President
February 7, 2013*

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 2012

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
Al Lounsbury	Carling Tenant Sponsor

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 2012 season, we had 15 teams - same as 2011 and down from 16 in 2010.

Over the past 5 seasons, the number of registered teams has remained stable. The last big drop in team count was in the 2007 season.

The Season In Review

1. 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. Our NSA contact changed from Leon leon@nsacanada.ca to Rick Shanahan lastout2004@rogers.com
2. This was our second year where the Carling landlord was the Federal Government (PWGSC). Although there was some uncertainty, we eventually received an ok to use the softball diamonds. The key enabler was the sponsorship and 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.
 - a. This year (unlike the previous year), team and player indemnity forms were provided by PWGSC. Filling out these forms was a condition of usage of the diamonds.
 - b. The PWGSC contact was changed this year from Mark Pridmore Mark.Pridmore@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca to Ian McKim Ian.McKim@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
 - c. Another change this year was the diamonds were non-smoking. A caution to this effect was added to the indemnity forms. Note that the City of Ottawa has introduced a similar prohibition on their diamonds.
3. We continued the practice of having the Captains Meeting at 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. We also collected the team payments at this meeting.
4. 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 umps for playoffs but independent ones for the finals
 - 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 of five teams, played with double elimination.
 - f. Schedules for teams catered, if possible, to any timing preference they may have indicated at registration.
5. The sportsmanship tracking continued although the awards were removed. This continued to provide information to the executives on the day-to-day operations of the league without having to attend every game.
6. League fees and the budget was also reviewed and approved by the captains.

7. We did not have any incidents this year, which was wonderful! This makes it two years in a row.
8. 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.
9. For end of year prizes, each team was provided prizes from NSA (jackets/sweaters). Each team could then distribute amongst themselves however they wished. To enable more of the NSA prizes to go to each team, we did not distribute trophies to the winners.
10. Considering the number of teams in the league, we tried to strike a balance between strong and weak ends of the season results by having one tier for the round-robin regular season and a longer playoff with three seeded groups. The league continues to have a couple of very strong teams and a couple of very weak teams with the rest bunching up in the middle.
11. 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.
12. Paul Miles after many years of service has retired as the scheduler. Thanks to Paul for his many years of service! Ian Holden rose to the occasion and took over the role of scheduler.
13. We switched over to new software on our website this past year which gave us some improvements over the older software. With the change, teams were able to manage their own contact list and details. Nicely done, Ian!

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 2012 season, other than sufficient game balls. For the 2012 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

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: \$2,882.13**

<i>Expenses</i>	<i>2012 Budget</i>	<i>2012 Actual</i>
Equipment	\$1000.00	\$650.88
Diamonds	0.00	0.00
Trophies	1100.00	1071.44
Playoffs	0.00	0.00
Exec	350.00	221.37
Web Hosting	205.00	277.67
NSA Fee	1500.00	1450.00
Misc	0.00	0.00
Total	4155.00	3671.36

<i>Income</i>	<i>2012 Budget</i>	<i>2012 Actual</i>
Fees	\$3375.00	\$3375.00
Interest	0.00	0.01
Total	\$3375.00	\$3375.01

Balance:	\$2102.13	\$2585.78
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Budget Summary and Assumptions

We began 2012 with a balance of \$2882 in our account. This is somewhat more money than we need to carry between seasons although it is within a reasonable margin. For the third consecutive season we tried to minimize our revenue in team fees to reduce our carry-over to 2013.

Spending was in line with the budget approved at the captains meeting. The only variance was that we spent less on equipment and we redirected trophy expenses to more prizes per team.

We continued to assume that we would be able to use the Carling diamonds at no charge. With this assumption, our carry-over target would be in the range of \$1750-2250 based on the expenses we expect to have at the start of the season before we have collected team fees.

Discussion of budget entries

The following will help explain the financials for 2012, showing what we budgeted versus what we actually spent (Table 1).

Equipment

In 2012 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 spend money on lime as we did not

have a playoff weekend. We did not need to replenish our first aid kits.

Diamonds

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

Trophies

NSA Canada offered us \$60 of the NSA team registration fee 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 (jackets/sweater) as opposed to paying for trophies for the winning teams.

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 various activities.

Web Hosting:

The league web site is hosted through Sibername.com. This year, we also bought some scheduling software. 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. The \$95 was a bit higher than the expected \$90 per team.

Miscellaneous:

There were no miscellaneous expenses this year.

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 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 should make an effort to determine what prizes we want from NSA as soon as possible in early May and get the order in so that we have a better chance to get the items we want at the best prices. We need to get feedback on what we should get. This could be done at the captains meeting.
3. We will continue to recommend that if a team doesn't have the solid 15 committed members by the appropriate pre-season deadline, 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.

The high number of forfeits for this year (12) suggests that we may have fewer teams next year.

4. The playoff and regular season checklist and workflow should be reviewed and updated. A thought is to have this as a Wiki document on our web site since this allows for easy additions and changes in one spot. But having it in some form is necessary to ensure deadlines or actions aren't missed.
5. 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.
6. The vice-president will update the code of discipline with the changes approved at the 2011 captain meeting.
7. 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 (benches, fences, etc). 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 are likely to be restricted to 4:30 pm to 6 pm timeslots.

- 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.
- **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. Al Lounsbury is actively working on this.
 - 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.
 - The league should consider if we can continue to offer teams a preferred time slot (e.g. 4:45 or 6:15) for their games. What is to be done when an early-only team plays a late-only team?
 - We may have to consider breaking up into divisions based upon start time preference or to require that teams must be able to play in any given time slot the league schedules games for.
 - Maybe it's time for the league to commit to one time slot that is a hybrid (e.g. 5:30 pm).
 - There are some people and some teams that won't be able to play if all games are 4:30 to 6 pm. That also needs to be considered.
 - We need more input from all teams to understand whether this issue is felt across the teams in order to decide on a change.
 - The season ran too long in 2012. Due to the off-weeks and an unfortunate spate of rain-cancelled games late in the season, the playoffs began in late August and ran, again with off-weeks, until late September. Teams were having issues getting players out as other sports had started and daylight hours made late games rushed with 6:15 pm starts.
 - If we have fewer teams next year, this will likely not be as large of an issue.