

MANAGERS' SURVEY – 2018

Managers' Survey comments in black.

Managers' Survey Review Committee comments in royal blue.

Recommendations from the Survey Review Committee to the Rules Committee in red.

What good or positive league related things did you, or your team, experience during conference play this past season?

Field/Facility Conditions:

- Tuesday Black Bob (55+): Field conditions & facilities were, once again, good
- Tuesday Black Bob (55+): Olathe police were great – there's always the occasional reminder to clean up adult beverage cans, or that the park is now closed. But again, great to deal with.

Management:

- Thursday – Heritage: Mark, you do a great job and I appreciate all you do and the hard work that goes into managing these three conferences. Clint, I really appreciate all you do running things.
- Tuesday – Black Bob (55+): Thanks to our Board for all the time, skill and attention that they dedicate to this organization so that all of us can enjoy the game we love. The retention and growth of KCMSSL is a testament to your effectiveness. Collectively, the Board and conference coordinators do a mostly thankless and superb job so others can have a great time. Thank you. Signed -- The Floor It & More players
- BRAVO!!! KCMSSL --- One big reason this league is the largest in the nation is because of the things like this.....i.e., requesting feedback and then constructively trying to balance that feedback with logic and addressing the suggestions by implementing new things.

Membership/Registration/Player Skill Ratings:

- Tuesday Black Bob (55+): Love the ease and simplicity of our online membership registration process and roster set-up/change system.
- Tuesday Black Bob (65+): Efficiency of our online membership registration process is very much welcomed. The implementation of roster restrictions the past couple of years was overdue, and I look forward to the upcoming player skill rating system channeling players, and teams, to their appropriate competitive levels within the organization.
- Thursday – Heritage: The separation of Gold-Silver-Bronze. I realize there are a couple of super-teams up there in Gold. I really don't know how to fix this one. All I can say is that MY team is made up of Silver-rated players. This may sound ludicrous, but maybe there could be 4 divisions -- Platinum-Gold-Silver-Bronze. Bottom line, winning each division requires superior play (i.e., winning the Silver division requires a Gold-level effort), so I'm just looking at some former division winners who now make up the lower tier and hoping the player skill-rating system positions teams properly.
 - We expect this will be corrected as a result of the implementation of the Player Skill Rating process starting with the 2019 season.
- Tuesday Black Bob (55+): Age 70+ exemption from rating system -- players at this age who are competing against players who are 15 – 20 years younger should not be forced to comply with Gold/Silver/Bronze. Alternative: all Age 70+ playing in a league allowing younger players should carry a Bronze rating. I believe that we're risking breaking up teams otherwise.

- Anyone in need of an explanation as to who the Player Skill Rating process works should visit our website. There's a "Player Skill Rating" heading in the menu on the left. ALL players' ages are part of the "tier-down" rating effect from a player's base rating. If help is needed in understanding the process, get in touch with Clint Berger – clintberger@hotmail.com, or 913.481.7937.
- Thursday – Heritage: I think the rating process is tough to implement. This year the Bombers (Silver- Heritage) clearly stacked their summer roster with Gold players. To me, if people want to do that just to win a t-shirt, good luck to them.
 - Again, we feel the Player Skill Rating process will address this concern. Silver teams, for example, will only be allowed a maximum of 3 Gold players on their rosters (no Platinum).

Sportsmanship:

- Tuesday – Black Bob (55+): Good sportsmanship amongst most teams
- Tuesday – Black Bob (55+): Sportsmanship, camaraderie, overall league organization and operation – Outstanding!!
- Saturday Competitive – Roe: Competition was good, the umpires were good, and the players exhibited good sportsmanship. It is nice to play during the daylight!
- I thought the sportsmanship between teams was better than it has ever been.

Team Parity:

- Monday – Hartman: Tensions were high at the end of last season and there were a number of players in our league not happy. So, we created/added a new team, which allowed for some shuffling of players around. It was tough because we didn't really have enough players to warrant a new team without getting subs each week, but in doing so, it allowed people to leave teams they were not happy with. I think this diffused quite a bit of the tension in our particular league. Credit goes to Bev Allen for orchestrating this addition and all the shuffling.
- Tuesday – Black Bob (55+): Most games challenging and competitive
- Monday Draft – Black Bob: I thought the draft league was the best it has been in a while, as it has a good combination of younger and older players and skill sets. Everyone seems to treat it like what it is supposed to be – a league for fun.
- Thursday Draft / Saturday Draft – Roe: This was my first year to play in the draft conference, and I really enjoyed it. I like the fact that there were no forfeits due to a team not having enough players. I go there to play softball and don't care who's on the other team, or who wins the game.

Umpiring:

- Monday – Hartman: I feel the umpire staff for the women were a lot better.
- Tuesday – Black Bob (55+): Umpiring was consistent and fair – no tension all season
- Umpiring much improved on Thursday at Heritage. Also received compliments on the umpires at Black Bob on Mondays and Tuesdays.
- Wednesday – Independence: would also like to see the umpire situation better organized as far as some kind of backup for those who can't make the games for whatever reason. I know on Tuesday and Wednesday in Independence we had a lot of absentees for the 2018 season.
 - We know this issue has already been reported to John Dehan Jr (Call The Game). He is aware of the problem, but if the problem persists in 2019, and it is felt no improvement is on the horizon, please contact Donna McGuire "immediately", or some other member of the board.
- Saturday Draft – Roe: The league needs to attract umpires that are willing to hustle. Too many umpiring errors are the result of umpires who refuse to hustle out into the field to make calls.

- Donna to address with John Dehan Jr.
- Saturday Draft – Roe: Each umpire should be provided an alarm-type device (one umpire uses one) that provides a tone/beep/alarm when the 50-minute mark hits for the 60-minute games. There have been a number of instances throughout the year where teams have felt they have been shorted game time. The umpire should always announce game start time, but this was done only in about 20% of my games this year. Also, the alarm-type device is necessary because most umpires wait until after the home team has batted and the teams are trading places before he/she checks the game time. The 50-minute warning has to be given before the third out of the home team occurs.
- Donna to address with John Dehan Jr.

What do you or your players feel the KCMSSL needs to do in order to move in a forward/positive direction relative to conference configurations; fair play; field conditions; rules; miscellaneous, etc.?

Improvements/Changes:

Conferences – Scheduling, Sessions:

- Tuesday Black Bob (55+): An odd # of teams in a conference automatically creates bye weeks. In combination with rain-outs and a 4th of July bye, Tuesday 55+ Gold required 15 weeks to play 9 doubleheaders. Summer Session never felt like it was a regular league and had no continuity.
 - Conference coordinator and team managers to discuss their specific format during the break-out session after our annual Managers' Meeting. An annual post-season conference coordinator/team managers meeting may also help this. ??
- Tuesday Black Bob (55+): Consider 1 extended May – August session / post season playoff – consider a single longer season that runs 15 – 16 weeks and concludes with a short playoff. This keeps teams competing for a majority of the season for a playoff berth while avoiding colder weather.
 - See suggestion above.....
- Tuesday Black Bob (55+): 4th of July week bye – Memorial Day, Labor Day and 4th of July should be regular league play unless multiple teams agree they can't field a team when schedules are being created. Was there an issue with Olathe providing umpires for Tuesday, July 3?
 - See suggestion above.....
- Tuesday Black Bob (55+): The Tuesday Summer Session standings demonstrated the need for a vibrant, 6 or 8 team conference for 60+. KC Kids dominated the 65+ Summer Session, KC Storm went winless and was rarely competitive in 55+ conference while Midwest Driving, a tournament team, could do no better than middle of the standings in that same 55+ group. The Board should consider resurrecting the 60+ Gold conference with allowances that have been used successfully in the past: grandfather in player(s) below age 60 if they are on an existing team roster, or give allowance for a couple of players <60 for the 1st year or two of the 60+ conference. These options would likely move Floor It & More into 60+ next year.
 - The current plan is to resurrect the 60+ Tuesday night Black Bob conference in 2019. All involved should have been aware of the fact that this conference did not return for the 2018 summer session due to one of its 4 teams folding after the 1st session. There was no need for grandfathered players to create the 60+ conference in 2018, so unless the board sees a dire need in 2019, grandfathering players (to attract teams) in 2019 will not occur.

- Wednesday – Independence: Would like to see if we could have 2nd placed teams recognized? Meaning that they should receive at the least a Trophy for 2nd place finishes. Why?...Because it builds morale within the teams and gives the others a chance to be in the RACE!...Even if it's for 2nd. You could raise the league team fees 10-15 dollars to cover a 2nd place prize for all leagues. Also?...It adds to the competition mentally for all involved to get into the chase for something.
 - Was discussed by the board. No action to address this at this time.
- Thursday – Heritage: Start the season sooner by at least 2-3 weeks. Since we cannot predict the weather.
 - We understand the sensibility behind this request. As mentioned with an earlier suggestion, this simply needs to be addressed by the conference coordinator(s)/team managers during the post Manager's Meeting breakout sessions in March. Option can be considered, and implemented, if there's enough interest and all aspects of the idea works for the specific Parks & Recreation involved.
- Thursday – Heritage: I think we should have a 3 session season – Spring-6 games, Summer-10 games, and Fall-6 games.
 - Again, something for the March post Manager's Meeting breakout sessions.
- Thursday – Heritage: I noticed on a couple of occasions this year that when we played early games there were fields not being used. Why do we play 8:30/9:30 games when there are open fields at 6:30?
 - A single open field cannot always be avoided because umpires are routinely not receptive to show-up to work just two games (if the 6:30/7:30 games are to be the only games on a given field). However, if there's ever two early open fields on the same night, then maybe there was something that should have been altered.
- Thursday – Heritage: The Thursday night schedule was crazy this year. The league should be set for the number of teams you have. By allowing more teams in than fields available, it makes it difficult when rainouts happen. We went 5 weeks where we did not play due to rainouts and byes. That is not the point of having the league. Once the league is full it is full, if more teams want in, find additional fields to play on.
 - Understand. Don't anticipate facing the same situation again, but will do our best to implement the most viable option if it does.

Field/Facility Conditions:

- I recommend that they do a better job of keeping the fields mowed and that we don't play so many games on Field C. Fields A and B are a lot better.
 - The various conference coordinators for this complex (Roe Park) will contact the appropriate Parks/city personnel in an effort to address this matter.
- Make decisions on field conditions earlier than they did the last year or so. Update rainout line quicker as I do live an hour away from the fields, as do others. As far as calling games, as long as safety is first, distance second and convenience third, everyone should be agreeable on playing/not playing. If they want to set a definitive time before a scheduled game to make a decision for the umpires and those traveling a long distance, that would be all I would add to the current procedure, unless they already do that.
 - We know each venue's inclement weather parameters are different. And we're not sure who submitted this concern, but we know of one example (for Olathe Parks & Rec.) whereby the rainout line message was "all is good" for the perfectly playable fields at Black Bob at 5:10 in the afternoon, and was changed immediately to a 5:15 message of "all games are canceled" when a storm came through and the fields had standing water already at that time. We realize we have some members who live 80+ miles from their field destination.

Weather conditions will definitely differ from home to the field, and the timing for canceling eventual rainouts is just that --- timing.

Home Runs:

- Home run rule for the Silver division, or maybe Bronze, at Heritage should be reviewed. The number of home runs for the Silver division should not be the same as the Bronze division.
 - **Recommend to Rules Committee: Change the rule for the Bronze division to one home run.**

Length of Games:

- Monday – Hartman: I would suggest moving up the time for determining the open inning, maybe even just a few minutes. In general, in our league, we are better on offense than we are on defense. This means that those open innings can go on for a while and it makes the rest of the games get pushed back. This is frustrating for the last games of the evening.
- Thursday – Heritage: To discourage late, late games we should consider going to 9-inning 90-minute games.
- Thursday – Heritage: The time limit rule needs to be better enforced. There were some games where we started 30 minutes late on the late games.
 - **EXTREMELY lengthy discussion covering the three items above. We even conducted a survey of 156 members who have, over the years, played one 9-inning game Saturday morning (at Roe Park) and have also played in two 7-inning games venues --- just to obtain their likes/dislikes with both. That survey came back with:**
 - 36 preferring the two 7-inning 60-minute games format
 - 18 preferring the one 9-inning 90-minute game format
 - 10 who stated it didn't matter to them either way, and
 - 5 suggesting a hybrid format of two 7-inning games and one 9-inning game on each field
 - This topic has been debated for hours, and hours, over the past years at the various venues; in our board meetings; over beers; etc., etc.....without resolution. No matter what we have tried, or what we have discussed trying, **WE KNOW WE WILL SATISFY SOME, AND UPSET OTHERS.** So, here are our suggested options – **which we suggest be determined individually for each conference (as a result of each coordinator discussing the matter with all team relative team managers):**
 - #1 – Stay status quo
 - #2 -- Hybrid venue: A combination of two 7-inning 60-minute games and one 10-inning 100-minute game per field each night. In the past – for a 4 team conference, as an example -- a 10-week session resulted in 20 games for each team. Under this scenario, a 12-week session will produce 18 games for each team (twelve 7-inning games and six 9-inning games)....BUT all late game players “should” get home sooner each night.
 - #3 – Straight 10-inning 100-minute games. 10 weeks generate 10 games
 - **Recommend to Rules Committee (Inclusive, or not, with Options 1, 2, and/or 3 above):**
 - **Option #1 -- When the game's set time-limit is reached, the inning being played becomes the final inning (no open inning). 5 run limit is still in effect for this last inning, so if the home team is behind by more than 5 runs, game over. If game ends in a tie at the end of this inning, it will constitute one extra inning of play in an effort to break the tie (as the current rule).**
 - **Option #2 – Retain the open inning, but automatic flip-flop after the last 5-run inning of play no matter if the home team is down 10 runs, or just 1 run. 50/50 chance home team is behind, and 50/50 chance (or so), that the home team scores enough runs forcing the visiting team to bat in the open inning.**

Pinch Runner:

- Pinch runner rule needs to be reviewed. There should be no pinch running from home in the Competitive conferences. Acceptable for the Draft conferences.
 - The one pinch runner from home plate still sounds reasonable, but this will be passed along to the Rules Committee for any recommended change.
 - R. BASE RUNNING.
 - 1. Courtesy runners.
 - c. Before the game, teams may designate one player who may have a courtesy runner from home, and announce this player to the umpire and opposing manager. If another player gets injured during the game, he may have a runner from home with the opposing manager's approval. The courtesy runner may be different for each at bat.

Rules:

- Regarding Roe Park (all three fields). If the ball rolls across the sidewalk, it's a ground rule double. If the ball hits the sidewalk and bounces over, it's a grounds rule double. If the ball rolls and stops in the middle of the sidewalk, it's a grounds rule double. If on Field "A" a fly ball hits the tree in right-center but lands in front of or on the sidewalk, it's a ground rule double. If it hits the tree but still clears the sidewalk, it's a home run. If the ball clears the sidewalk on the fly, it's a HR. The idea is for safety so no player comes into contact with the possible slippery sidewalk while trying to make a play.
 - This rule was already "verbally" implemented in 2018 so should become part of the updated 2019 rules.
- Saturday Draft – Roe: My experience in draft leagues this year indicates draft teams that field a full team (11 to 15 players) are at an unfair disadvantage when playing a team that is short players (8 to 10 players). The team short of players requires 1 to 3 players from the full team to fill in. What I noticed is the team short of players typically are missing the players that are lower rated, resulting in the better players batting more often, a disadvantage to the team that fields a full team. I would suggest providing only a catcher to the short player team and if the short team has less than 10, then the short team plays without the rover or fourth outfielder. Also, for every player the short player team has to borrow, the team providing the player should receive at least 3 runs per game for every player provided.
 - In the past, players from one team were asked to play (as a full team player—batting and fielding) on a short team and they overwhelmingly rejected the idea preferring to stay on the team that they were originally drafted onto. Teams playing on the same field have always been willing to "loan" defensive players to their opponents being short. In some instances, it is true that the short team has an advantage with stronger players being able to bat more due to a shorter lineup. In other instances, the "borrowed" defensive replacements might not be the strongest fielders thus weakening the short team's defensive play. It generally evens itself out.
 - The other point mentioned was about providing a catcher to a short team and if the short team is still lacking a full defensive roster of 11, the short team then only plays with 10 and misses a rover or outfielder is definitely putting an unfair disadvantage on the short team. It is quite frankly an unsportsmanlike gesture and the antithesis of what draft league play is all about. The same sportsmanship issue applies to give runs to the team loaning players. It goes against the reason why draft leagues were formed: to allow less competitive players the opportunity to enjoy playing softball without the competitive atmosphere that accompanies competitive league and tournament play.

Standings:

- Saturday Draft – Roe: Scores and standings need to be posted and updated ASAP once the games are completed (in a couple of days). Some leagues do not even bother to update and a few take weeks to do so.
 - Conference coordinator will be apprised of this matter.

Substitutes:

- Thursday – Heritage: I'm still sticking to lowering the minimum number of rostered players to be able to play a game vs forfeiting or rescheduling from 8 to 6. While we didn't get hit with it this year like we did last year, we played multiple games in the second session with legitimately injured players who ONLY came out because I wouldn't have been able to get to 8 without them, even though I had 14 on my roster. If it happened to my team, it also would happen to others. Getting subs isn't hard, but trying to coerce truly hurt players to come out just so we can play the games that night sucks.
 - **Recommend to Rules Committee:** (or at least trial test it – per Mark Spletstaszer's agreement – for the 1st session of 2019): Reduce minimum number of rostered players, versus a forfeit, from 8 rostered players, to 6 – as long as all replacement players are rated the same skill level (for the conference in question) as the subject team's rating. In other words, a Silver team can only pull-in Silver, or Bronze, skill rated players as substitutes.....no higher rated substitution players allowed.
- Thursday – Heritage: Sub rules are ridiculous. If a person pays his \$20 membership, he/she should be able to sub on any team short of players as long as he/she meets rating parameters. Only one team on Thursday nights had a problem with it.
 - **Recommend to Rules Committee:** With the implementation of Player Skill Ratings in 2019, it may be time to allow teams to substitute with players from other conferences, BUT with the same parameters as not above. That being, a Silver-rated team can only substitute with Silver, or Bronze-rated players (for the subject conference)....no higher rated players allowed.
- Thursday Draft / Saturday Draft – Roe: One suggestion about substitute players would be to recruit players from other fields that have an excess of players rather than having the opposing team fill in unless the opposing team has enough excess players. On the hot days, guys that go both ways can become very exhausted. We put our team at a disadvantage when we helped the opposing team with their shortage of players.
 - In the past, players from one team were asked to play (as a full team player—batting and fielding) on a short team and they overwhelmingly rejected the idea preferring to stay on the team that they were originally drafted onto. In order to allow both teams to play with 11 players (in an effort to NOT sit guys on the team with excess players) we've allowed managers to have a "gentlemen's agreement" whereby, especially on hot days, the defensive replacements are not mandated to only play catcher and RF. In an effort to save wear and tear on the borrowed defensive players and in an effort to shorten the time needed to shuffle players in and out to the outfield, managers were allowed to have replacement players play 1B and 3B (the corner position closest to their dugout). This solution seemed to work out well for both sides.

Needs to be added:

Field of Dreams:

- The biggest challenge for the board long term is to find a single venue for all Kansas side games with a sufficient number of fields for leagues to only play early games with a 7 p.m., or so, start. This should be goal number one for the board. Please explore all possibilities, though I know they are few. We could offer Mid-America an attractive package of nights and mornings that no one else could offer. Perhaps Miller's Woods would also be interested. The dream to build our own park was certainly a step in the right direction. Something for the interim based on some creative thought and ample research is badly needed now.
 - I think we all agree but haven't won the lottery yet.....got to have the property and \$\$\$\$\$. But on a more serious note, we had to abandon the Blue River Park concept due to the property deemed as a "Floodway" area. We are still interested in the project planned near the intersection of Renner Blvd & College Blvd. in Lenexa, but nothing moving forward on that right now. Also still being told by Dan Tarwater (Jackson County, MO) that our desire for a complex there is still being considered.

First Aid:

- Monday – Hartman: We had an injury last week during our game that was quite likely going to require stitches at a medical facility. We had a paramedic subbing on our team, so she was helping. Afterwards, she said the trainer's kit was VERY pathetic and lacked the basic necessities. I don't know who that falls under - league or parks/rec, but that's terrible.
 - A viable, and possibly legal, decision needs to be addressed by the board. We have no definitive conclusion as to how we feel it's best to proceed on this matter at this time.

Needs to be eliminated:

The Omission of Wes Weddle's Attitude:

- Thursday – Heritage: A certain person cat-calling and brow-beating one of my players was pure gamesmanship aimed at getting a competitive edge not based on softball. He's done the same thing before. No place for that in this league and from leadership. I really felt sorry for my player having to put up with that, and although he took it with a manly smile, it affected the game.
 - Per Mark Spletstaszer, this matter was raised at the time but then dropped when requested to be channeled through the appropriate channels.

Equalizers:

- Monday – Hartman: I think the women's league went well. The only thing I want to see gone and not be reinstated is the equalizer. The teams in the upper division are pretty well balanced. We did not use it in the second session and the games were well balanced.
 - Sounds as though all has worked out, but equalizers are still recommended --- where deemed necessary to create a balanced playing field.