

Senior Softball-USA (SSUSA) Newsletter: Volume 8, Edition 2

Senior Softball-USA <news@seniorsoftball.com>

Fri 2/25/2022 2:34 PM

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Women's 50+ Major TOC Champions, Kryptonite (FL).

From the Dugout - Balancing Safety and Competitive Play



From the Dugout
By Terry Hennessy

We recently received an email from a pitcher who had been injured by a batted ball in a tournament, asking us to put in screens for pitchers.

We receive this recommendation often – and the National Rules Committee has discussed it for the past several years.

We do believe pitching screens have an important place in the sport – in league play and batting practice.

There is a significant difference between league and tournament softball. In the 250 leagues we sanction, many do use screens because of the difference in age and skill level of the players on each team. This is appropriate in my view

2022 Tournament of Champions (2021 Roster Event) Overview

By Donna McGuire
SSUSA Director and Midwest UIC

POLK COUNTY, Fla. – Teams from 29 states, Canada and Guam gathered here to compete Feb. 11-13 in the 16th annual Tournament of Champions, Senior Softball USA's crown jewel event.

Teams had to win qualifying tournaments to be invited, which meant that all 103 entrants were champions before arriving. But only one team per division finished as the senior softball's *newest* champs and winners of free, high-quality championship rings.

In addition to games, players participated in hitting clinics, an [all-star contest](#) and [skills competitions](#). A January surge in pandemic cases caused cancellations of the Thursday night banquet and Saturday night Louisville Slugger Warriors game against the TOC All-Star winners.

Except for light Sunday morning rain, teams enjoyed mostly comfortable sunny weather as they battled in more than 320 games spread across four softball complexes over three days.



because of the difference in age and skill levels in league play.

In tournament play, the players are divided not only by age, but by skill level to minimize the chance of injury. In the past 25 years that I have been in this position, we have not seen an increase in the number of serious batted-ball injuries in tournament play.

That is NOT to say that injuries are not important, but it IS to say that the game of softball has risks, especially for pitchers because they are the closest to the batter.

To that end, we mandate masks and recommend other protective gear for pitchers. There will still be injuries because of the nature of the game.

Our goal is to balance safety while keeping the game active enough so seniors will want to continue to play competitively.

We do care. I play 3rd base occasionally, wear a mask and shin guards and still have been hit by balls. I play knowing the risks because I love the sport.

If we see an increase in the number of serious batted ball injuries, we will consider a change. We have not seen an increase in injuries to date.

Terry Hennessey is the Chief Executive Officer of Senior Softball USA and can be reached at: Terryh@seniorsoftball.com.

Kenzel Jessie Awarded SSUSA Umpire of the Year

Kenzel Jessie of Maryland was named the 2021 Senior Softball USA Umpire of the Year! Congratulations Kenzel!

Jessie received his plaque at the Tournament of Champions (photo below).



From left to right: Tim McElroy (SSUSA National Director), Terry Hennessey (SSUSA Chief

In the **Women's 50+ Major** division, Kryptonite from Florida won four of the five games it played while posting an average victory margin of nine runs. It defeated Unfazed, a Virginia team, 24-13 in the title game. Unfazed edged Team Works of Virginia 7-6 to advance to the championship.

Lew's Crew/Exceeding Expectations of Maryland defeated Old Nasty Curves of California 13-3 and 17-14 in a best-two-out-of-three bracket in the **Women's 50+ AAA** division.

In men's competition, Suncoast/Adidas/Shades 50s of Florida won the combined four-team **40+ AAA/50+ Major Plus** division with an undefeated run through pool and bracket play. Autism Pride captured the **40+ AAA** division crown by beating out the other 40+ AAA teams. It capped its weekend with an exciting 17-16 victory over Hit N Solos of Washington before choosing not to take on Suncoast in the title game because it lacked enough healthy players.

The **men's 50/55+ Platinum** division showcased seven teams from seven states. Ancel/GV from Minnesota captured the title with a 21-12 victory over Elevated 50 from Utah. After entering bracket play as the fifth seed, Ancel/GV notched three narrow victories -- by two runs, one run, and one run -- to reach the title game. Those games included a 20-19 triumph in the winner's bracket finals against Elevated 50, which then rebounded to win the third-place game 21-18 over S&S Exteriors from Kansas.

Eight teams battled in a competitive **50+ AAA** division that saw six teams finish 1-1 through pool play. Chi-Town Ballers, which entered bracket play as the second seed, notched victories of 21-6, 17-16 and 20-5 before defeating top-seeded Crawford Contracting of Michigan 16-14 in the championship game. Crawford's only two tournament losses were to Chi-Town. The Originals from Texas finished third.

Gaum Seniors 50 (photo below), which traveled the farthest to compete, dominated the men's **50+ AA** division, winning four games by an average score of 21-7. (Gaum's only loss came in pool play against a 55+ AA team.) In the title game, Gaum defeated Team LBK of Texas 20-4. Team LBK had defeated Manifest 50, another Texas team, 9-8 to advance to the championship.



Salty Old Dogs, the only team to defeat Guam in a combined **50/55+** division for pool play, earned the **55+ AA** championship in a best two-of-three format against the Longshoremen of Virginia. Salty Old Dogs, a Texas team that went undefeated, swept the Longshoremen 14-4 and 18-3.

Rock N Legends of Texas (photo left), a **55+ Major** team, also enjoyed an undefeated tournament but needed victories in some close games to do so. It battled Phoenix Tube/REMAX of Florida three times, starting with a 15-14 classic in pool play. Rock N Legends narrowly won again, 17-16, in the finals of the winner's bracket. That pushed Phoenix Tube/REMAX into the elimination bracket, where it

Executive Officer), Kenzel Jessie (2021 SSUSA Umpire of the Year).

2022 TOC Skills Contest Winners

POLK COUNTY, FL – More than 150 players competed in four skills contests here on Thursday, Feb. 10, at the Tournament of Champions. Contests included Speed (fastest around bases), Power Hitting (most home runs), Precision Hitting (accuracy hitting through cones) and Pitching (most balls in a bucket).

Power Hitting Contest:

Winners:

Men's 40-50: Pat Doyle, 53, Texas Aces 50s

Men's 55-60: Bobby Gilbert, 60, Texas Aces 50s

Men's 65-70: Gerard Stigliano, 69, of Syracuse Cyclones (NY)

Men's 75-85: Gary Nicolay, 75, of Venom (FL)

Women's 50: No home runs

Precision Hitting Contest:

Winners:

Men's 40-50: Joel Magallanes, 52, All-Quip / SOWC (OR)

Men's 55-60: Ron Hogan, 64, of the Michigan Merchants

Men's 65-70: Jeff Toburen, 68, of the Michigan Merchants

Men's 75-85: Taz Salverson, 74, of the Minnesota Lumberjacks 75s

Women's 50: No winners

Pitching Contest:

Winners:

Men's 40-50: No Winner

Men's 55-60: Peter Dziawura, 64, from Full Throttle (AZ)

Men's 65-70: Jon Glazer, 70, Long Island Jaguars (NY)

Men's 75-85: No Winner

Women's 50: Nancy Peterson, 55, Lew's Crew (MD)

Speed Contest:

Winners:

Men's 40-50: Jessie Rodriguez, 52, of Elevated 50s (UT)

knocked off Homer Lover of Ontario, Canada, 16-14 to earn another shot at Rock N Legends. This time, Rock N Legends pulled away to win 16-9.

In the 10-team **55+ AAA** division, Team Illinois lost its first pool game, entered bracket play as the fifth seed and then survived a 15-14 nail bitter over The Winter Haven All-Stars of Florida. That launched an undefeated run for Team Illinois all the way through the title game, which it won 19-16 over Crawfords 55 of Michigan. Finance of America 55 from New Jersey took third.

Olympian Athletics 60s ([photo below](#)) of Pennsylvania earned the **60+ Major** crown in a four-team division. After entering pool play as the second seed, it defeated Suncoast Midwest 19-15 and Scrap Iron Rocky Mountain Thunder 10-6 to reach the title game. Once again, it beat Rocky Mountain Thunder, this time 13-9. Suncoast took third place.



The **60+ AAA** division featured the tournament's largest bracket with 12 teams. Only three survived pool play undefeated, and two of them ended up meeting in the championship game: The Chicago Panthers and The Ockers Co. of Massachusetts. As it turned out, the only losses those two teams suffered were to each other. They met first in the finals of the winner's bracket, where the Panthers prevailed 14-12. To earn a rematch, Ockers defeated Texas Thunder 21-20 in the third-place game. In the first championship game, Ockers notched a 15-13 victory. That set up the decisive "if" game. The Panthers prevailed 11-7.

In a rematch of the 2021 **60+ AA** finals, The Starboard/OTS of Delaware and Bucks Run Farms of Nebraska needed two championship games to decide the winner. All six teams in the division finished pool play 1-1. Starboards, the second seed, defeated Bucks Run, the fifth seed, 21-19 in the finals of the winner's bracket. Bucks Run knocked off Full Throttle 15-12 in the elimination bracket to reach the title game. Bucks Run won the first championship game 16-7. In the "if" game, Starboard claimed a thrilling 20-16 back-and-forth battle. Full Throttle won three elimination games before finishing third.

Via Citrus 65 of Florida survived two thrilling games against North Idaho Softball Club to win the five-team **65+ Major** division with an unbeaten record. Via Citrus defeated North Idaho 22-21 in the finals of the winner's bracket and won the championship game over North Idaho 26-23. Third place went to Slug-A-Bug of Florida.

The **65+ AAA** title went to the unbeaten and top-seeded Florida Mustangs ([photo below](#)), which defeated Texas Thunder 16-1 in the title game of a seven-team bracket. Texas Thunder entered bracket play as the last seed but knocked off the second and sixth seeds to reach the winner's bracket finals. Thunder lost that game to the Mustangs 19-9 before defeating Talaga Construction 18-17 in the third-place game.

Men's 55-60: Glenn Pierce, 60, of the Long Island Jaguars (NY)

Men's 65-70: Rich Bettley, 69, of Talaga Construction (CT)

Men's 75-85: Gene Thompson, 76, of the Minnesota Masters

Women's 50: Doloris Patterson, 54 of Unfazed (VA)

See the full story in the Spring Edition of the Senior Softball Newspaper coming in March.

Best Wishes for SSUSA Member Steve Schwartz

Softball News Report

On January 29, long-time Senior Softball player Steve Schwartz, 74, "sustained a fall from his inversion table and suffered a spinal cord injury leaving him with little use of his arms and legs," according to his wife, Barbara.

Schwartz has played Senior Softball for 20+ years. He's played with Valley Fog 70 (CA), Triple Play 70 (CA), Damaged Goods 65 (CA), Redwood City Cardinals 60 (CA), Mustangs 60 (CA) and early teams such as Prime Time 55, Stixx 50, and Fifty Caliber.



"He is currently in a Rehab Facility in Phoenix and showing some signs of improvement" but is "relying on someone else to help with his everyday tasks," said his wife. After rehab, which consists of 15 hours of physical therapy weekly, "he will need a hospital bed and wheelchair and someone to help with his care at home." Barbara is unable to provide the amount of care he will need once he is able to go back home.

The family is asking you to keep Steve and his family in your prayers. They asked cards be sent to the address below:
Steve and Barbara Schwartz
1817 Lynwood Drive
Concord, CA 94519

The family is accepting donations to help pay for the necessary items to bring Steve home and for medical expenses. Donations can be sent to Steve's daughter, Erin Stacey, at 7032 Via Anacapa, San Jose, CA. 95139, or contact Barbara at 925-639-4600.



MP Components/Bomb Squad of Michigan won both games of a best two-of-three bracket against the Montana Cutthroats for the **65+ AA** title. Final scores were 24-10 and 21-16.

The **70/75+ Gold** division featured eight teams for pool competition with teams then breaking into two brackets. Venom defeated Lane Construction 16-15 in the first of a two-out-of-three Platinum bracket. The teams decided not to play on Sunday because of adverse weather.

The Bulls from Florida won the six-team **70+ Silver** division after starting bracket play as the fifth seed. They won 22-10, 17-8 and 15-4 before entering the title match against the Long Island Jaguars 70s Red team, which fought all the way through the elimination bracket to reach the championship game. The Bulls won the title 19-9. Third place went to the Syracuse Cyclones.

Eight teams combined for pool play in a **75/80+ Gold** division before splitting into two groups for bracket play. AMR South 75s and Florida Investment Properties 80s were to play a best-of-three series for the **75/80 Platinum** title. However, after AMR won the first game on Saturday, the teams decided not to play in the rain on Sunday.

Meanwhile, six teams battled for the **75/80+ Gold** division title, a bracket that featured three one-run contests between the final two teams. In the finals of the winner's bracket, the Minnesota Masters defeated Midwest Express ([photo below](#)) of Iowa 10-9. In the elimination bracket, Midwest Express beat the Long Island Jaguars 75s 16-6 to set up a rematch with Minnesota. In a thrilling finish to the division, Midwest Express double-dipped Minnesota 13-12 and 12-11 to capture the crown.



The men's **75/80+ Silver** division involved one **75+ AA** team and three **80+ AAA** teams. The "youngsters," also known as the Minnesota Lumberjacks, beat up on their elders and won all six games they played. Minnesota defeated the second-place Syracuse Cyclones 16-5 in a game that started as a nail biter before Minnesota pulled away. The Chicago Geezers finished third. The Cyclones claimed the 80AAA title.

In the **85+ Senior** Division, Center 4 Sight ([photo below](#)) from Florida and Team Rehabilitation from Minnesota played a best-of-three to

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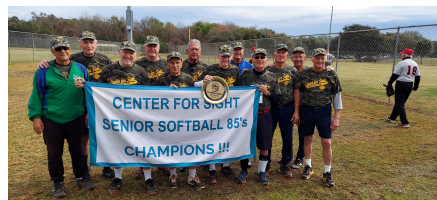


website and email systems, you can view the newsletters on our website as well!

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After we send out the newsletters via email, we upload them to the archive as PDFs the same day.

determine a champion. Center 4 Sight finished off Team Rehab in two games, winning 13-8 and 14-11.



2022 All-Star Game Results!

This year's All-Star Game took place Feb. 9 at the 16th annual 2022 Tournament of Champions in Winter Heaven, Polk County, FL.

Each TOC-competing team selected one player to compete in the game. Two TOC managers were selected for the All-Star teams. The players wore their individual team jerseys.

Cindy Hall of Lew's Crew (MD) & Glenn Howard of Montana Cutthroats served as the co-managers of the American All-Star team ([left photo](#)); & Terry Hennessy (Chief Executive Office of SSUSA) of Sacramento Islanders and Mark Haupt of Scrap Iron/Rocky Mountain Thunder (CO) co-managed the National All-Star team ([right photo](#)).



The National All-Star team came out victorious by narrowly defeating the American team 30-29.

[Click here](#) to see the players on each team, and [click here](#) for more photos of the game.

A Boys' Game by Charles Byrum

Charles L. Byrum, 77, of the Chicago area and active in Senior Softball USA 1999 to 2017 has published a senior softball themed book: *A Boys' Game* (2021).

Here's an excerpt:

"Hank Branson, 58... does everything he can to avoid falling into the routines that signify the onset of the aging process. One day, a friend tells Hank about a senior softball organization where teams of players over 50 years of age play tournaments throughout the summer against others their age, with the best being invited to play in a world

championship tournament in Las Vegas at the end of the season." Sounds familiar. "Fascinated, [Hank] contacts the local team in Chicago where he lives and is invited to play."

If you're interested in joining Hank on his journey discovering the exciting world of senior softball, check out the book and author's website [here](#).



SSUSA's very own Terry Hennessy, CEO, calls it "A remarkable book. The story of Hank Branson and his teammates captures what senior softball is all about."

In addition to an author, Charles Byrum is a lawyer and arbitrator who still plays and coaches senior softball when given the chance. He has played softball throughout his life.

He was inspired to write *A Boys' Game* after noticing senior softball's "physical, social, and psychological benefits". As a SSUSA member, he has played on the Chicago Gray Socks 65/70+ teams.

[TOC's of March](#)

Senior Softball News
By Nic Francois

As we wrapped-up our 2022 Tournament of Champions last week in Florida, it's time we prepare for the upcoming TOCs of March: [Spring National Championships](#), the [Spring World Championships](#), and the [Tidewater Classic](#).

Deadlines are fast approaching for these tournaments. Enter and pay your fees now to guarantee your spot! Please remember, we do not consider your team entered until we receive the entry fee.

Here are the details:

[2022 Spring National Championships](#)

New host hotels have been posted on the tournament website

Location: Polk County, FL
Dates of Play: March 18-20, 2022
Deadline: Friday, March 4, 2022
Entry Fee: \$555



VisitCentralFlorida.org has a long list of everything to do while in Polk County from fish, museum, nightlife, to Disney World. Polk County is in the middle of everything.

[2022 Spring World Championships](#)

The Spring Worlds deadline is fast approaching, so book your host hotel now.

Location(s): Mesquite, NV / St. George, UT

Dates of Play: March 18-27, 2022

Deadline: Friday, February 25, 2022

Entry Fee: \$580



[Sand Hollow](#) is only 20mins North of St. George and it's perfect for paddle boarding.

[2022 Tidewater Classic](#)

Please note that the Tidewater Classic has new, earlier dates this year.

Location: Virginia Beach, VA

Dates of Play: March 23 - 27, 2022

Deadline: Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Entry Fee: \$555



[Virginia Beach Boardwalk](#)

Other Updates:

Hotel information has been updated for the [Iowa Spring Warm-up](#) (April 21 - April 24, 2022 - West Des Moines) and for the [Iowa Senior Open](#) (May 12 - May 15, 2022 - Waterloo) qualifiers. Please note: Please support SSUSA host hotels. They support our sport and

help keep your entry fees down. In addition, unlike online hotel reservation services, SSUSA can assist you with any host hotel concerns. Thank you.

As a reminder, teams must play in at least one (1) qualifier during the season in order to secure its qualifying roster to play in the Eastern/Western National Championships, and the World Championships. Hope to see you soon!

The [2022 SSUSA Palmetto Challenge](#) has been added to our list of qualifiers! Join us June 3-5 in Florence, South Carolina.

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