

Fallbrook Senior Softball History & Overview

July, 2021

This summary will hopefully serve as a reference for newer players and some nostalgia for our older members.

FSS was established in February, 2000 at Ingold's Sports Park, a non-county park subsidized by Town Supervisor funds and donations from the private sector. FSS is accountable to the Fallbrook Sports Association, a volunteer group which governs all aspects of Ingold Sports Park.

In 2000, there was no Field #2 and the large, main field was not synthetic turf as it is today. The current, adjacent girls' softball field was all grass and unsuited for softball. FSS played on the main field with its 4 PM schedule which also included Saturday morning games. Some games were played on the upper field due to scheduling concerns despite it being very hazardous.

FSS began with four teams. There were only two drafts per year. Players remained on the same team, playing two seasons every six months.

The initial cost per season was \$25. We had four sets of different colored shirts which were exchanged among the players as teams changed at the half year mark. Hats and softballs and other incidentals were also covered by this fee.

In 2006 FSS began to evolve with refinements in procedures and rules. We began drafting for four separate seasons per year with five teams per season. Saturday games fell by the wayside. At one point, we had five playing seasons in a year.

Things changed drastically within the next few years. Funding was no longer provided through the Town Supervisor's subsidy and Ingold had to become completely self-sufficient. Fees were increased three-fold and the park was quickly in the red.

It was around this time that I became Co-Commissioner with another league player, Marc and we began to establish numerous league policies. The league was no longer run at the whim of the Commissioner and was

set up as a democracy with the Board consisting of all current team managers and the Commissioner(s) with a one vote apiece voice. Major issues such as buying a screen for the pitchers, eliminating run-through of the bases, switching to only two colors for shirts (to economize), etc. were first voted on by the members before being enacted. The Condensed Rules which departed from SSUSA rules were composed. These rules made our league unique.

Money and registration fees were of major concern. At the beginning of my tenure as Commissioner, we had a treasury with only \$200 in it. Slowly, we created ways within the league to build the treasury. Using many of our talented people, we created and sold custom made, laminated baseball cards for the players who enjoyed distributing them amongst family and friends. We also had I.C.E. (in case of emergency) cards made. This had vital information and a picture ID of each player for emergency contact and medication interaction. Many of the old timers still have these on their softball bags. Additionally, we had FSS sweatshirts, wind breakers and customized shirts made for the league to raise money.

Additionally, we had golf outings, visits to ballgames and most significantly, our annual dinner/raffle held in December which currently subsidizes our registration fees and equipment purchases. Our treasury is currently over \$7500.

There were many rough patches that FSS went through in dealing with increasing fees. The FSA often refused to recognize the value of seniors in our community. For a long time, FSS was privileged with discounted rates because we were seniors and we used Field #2 (finally completed) when no one else used the park. Twice in the past, we suspended our season or had to threaten to leave Ingold and establish a new league in San Marcos unless we were shown the respect we demanded. Today, we pay a reasonable rate and are given our half hour of pre-game practice time gratis.

Many of our current members and certainly our newer players may not be aware that we have confidentially given scholarships to players and other forms of assistance to those in need over the years. We find ways to tactfully assist members in need with funding, job connections and living adjustments. Many times we have tapped the talents and manpower of our

people to pitch in for a good cause by providing needed helpers for a worthwhile endeavor.

The ultimate goal of FSS is to have as many seniors active in a competitive yet social environment for as long as possible. We are a recreational league that puts the accent on having fun while staying in shape and staying safe. A certain camaraderie develops among players which enhances the competitive experience.

We have incorporated many unique rules to enable older players and often injured players to continue participating. At the onset of the league, batters were allowed to have runners from home. Players could run full speed through the bases. There was no pitching screen. There was no coed line and there was no rule regarding a clean hit awarding first base. "Slide or avoid" did not exist. All of this has changed due to the diligence of our membership voting on each issue to ensure safety and longevity in the league. It is a process that is flexible and changes continuously as new ideas and innovations arise. This is part of the beauty of our league.

We have had two players ejected from the league over the years. One player endangered the safety of another player and was immediately dismissed. The other player was extremely confrontational on the field and off. In both cases, the Board made the final determination that those players, due to poor sportsmanship, unsafe practices and an unwillingness to conform to behavior that exemplifies the league should be dismissed. FSS expects a positive approach, encouragement to improve, a learning atmosphere and a team effort to help each other while having fun.

Hopefully, this brief summary of FSS will better help everyone to understand our goals and what we strive for.

Chuck