

WSSL Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is WSSL?

Williamsburg Senior Softball League (WSSL) is a recreational slow pitch softball league for men (over 50) and women (over 40) in the greater Williamsburg area. Founded in 2019, WSSL has grown from a three-team league with 34 members who played 24 games to a ten-team league having two divisions with 140+ members playing a 40 game schedule in 2023. Our season extends from April through November (we take a 6-week break during July and August). We made it through the 2020 season by taking appropriate COVID-19 precautions. Safety is a high priority for our players and fans.

We organize our teams into two divisions to serve our members better. The Yorktown Division is for younger players or those with a high skill level, providing for competitive softball. The Jamestown Division is for older players (66+ for men, 56+ for women) or those with reduced physicality, providing for more relaxed softball.

2. How do I apply for membership?

Players need to register to participate in the league. There is a \$75 membership fee for the 2024 season. A single registration will apply to the entire year. Please visit the WSSL home page at (www.WSSLVA.org) to obtain the registration form.

Specific question can be answered by contacting: softballisfun2022@gmail.com or calling 425-591-4878.

3. I haven't played softball for many years; will I be able to participate?

Yes!! Many of our current players had this same concern. You will find that the old skills will return very quickly with regular play (although nothing is done quite as fast or as easy as we remember doing it years ago). Also, the league will be holding off-season training sessions in Jan-Feb 2024 for both current and new players at the Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex (WISC). These sessions will cover a variety of softball skills including hitting, infield and outfield play, throwing, pitching, plus some general practice sessions. The sessions will be led by several of our better players who have significant playing and/or coaching experience and will be done in a relaxed way to help players of all skill levels. They will also have a specific focus on stretching to help prevent injuries.

Players who haven't been physically active recently should note that the league has instituted a set of Minimum Performance Standards (<https://www.wsslva.org/minimum-performance-standards.html>). New players are encouraged to review the performance standards and consider whether they can meet the requirements. The league will offer focused WISC sessions to help players meet the performance standards. New players are advised to begin their own preparations that could include a stretching regimen (check out YouTube), jogging, walking, and the use of free weights and weight machines.

4. Do women play in WSSL?

Absolutely!! About 10% of our players are women, and we are very interested in increasing that participation in the future.

5. Where and when does WSSL play games?

Games are all played on ball fields in the Williamsburg-James City County area. Currently we use the Williamsburg Parks and Recreation fields at Quarterpath Park (202 Quarterpath Road, Williamsburg, VA). Each team plays two games each week on different days. In the past five years, games have been played on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Games are played in the morning, typically starting at 9:00 am, and are limited to approximately 75 minutes. A second game starts on the same field at 10:30 am and usually ends by noon or shortly thereafter. Following the games, many of the players gather in a designated local restaurant for lunch.

6. May I join WSSL and continue to work?

Yes. Several WSSL members continue to work and play. It may, however, require a degree of cooperation by your employer, as we do ask that you be able to maintain the commitment you indicated when joining. Many of our working members arrange with their employers to play one day a week or play out of our substitute player pool on days when they can arrange time off from work.

7. What happens if I need to miss a game or go on vacation?

We recognize that players may need to occasionally miss games and go on vacation. It is your responsibility to notify your manager as soon as you know that you will not be available for a particular play date.

8. What equipment will I need to play?

Players are required to provide their own glove and shoes [no metal cleats or spikes; removable molded or plastic cleats, or hard leather cleats are permitted, either in practice or during game play]. Official softball shoes or shoes with soft rubber cleats are strongly recommended. If you do not already own equipment, we recommend you talk with some experienced players before making the investment. Typically, players are willing to loan their individual bats to other players, but you should always ask for permission to use the bat of another player. The League provides approved softballs, a team shirt, and a hat.

9. How do you handle the range of softball and physical skills among players?

As the league has continued to grow, we were able to create two separate divisions in 2023. We will assess all our players and new recruits against criteria of different softball and physical skills. We will then use this to help determine which division would be most appropriate for each individual to ensure that they are playing with people whose skills are most compatible. In addition, these assessments are shared with league team managers who then conduct a “draft” to determine which players go on which teams.

10. I have had past surgeries that restrict my range of movement and/or mobility; will I be able to participate?

Yes!! Many of our current players have also had these types of surgeries in the past including various kinds of joint replacements, ligament tears, etc. We have used substitute runners for players who have significant difficulty running, and we anticipate using physical abilities as part of the criteria in determining which division would be most appropriate for each of our players. However, player safety is very important to our league, so there would be an expectation that players would have some minimum physical ability so that there is not an increased risk of injury.

11. What is the level of competition?

Although all our players enjoy the competitive aspect of playing league softball, we have found that there are different levels of competitive focus among our players. Some value a more relaxed experience where the camaraderie and just playing softball is more important than a heavier focus on winning. This would be another factor in determining to which division an individual would be assigned.

12. What are the accommodations to assure the safety of players?

We follow USA-Softball senior men's slow pitch softball rules (with some WSSL modifications) to increase the safety of players. Examples are:

- We utilize a scoring plate 8' to the right of home plate in line with the first base line, used by the runner to decrease the chance for runner/catcher contact. There is no sliding into home.
- We use a runner's bag at first base to decrease the chance of collision.
- Courtesy runners are allowed (on a limited basis) after a batter reaches 1st base.
- Masks are provided (but not required) for catchers, pitchers, and umpires (umpires are players from other teams not involved in the game they are umpiring).

NOTE: No alcohol is permitted at any time on the field or in the stands.

Sportsmanship is a key aspect of the game that we emphasize in WSSL. Our principles in this area are expressed by the Code of Conduct that is included in our Rules Manual, which can be found on our website.