

**PRCS Director's Responses to Concerns Expressed in 11/02/15 Emails from Ken Widelitz & Terry Ballentine Regarding Approving a New Agreement with Major League Softball
(Responses are in Bold Italics)**

Dear Ms. Mooney,

I am unable to attend tomorrow evening's meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Eugene Paulish has told me you are the person to whom I should direct comments and you will read them into the record. My comments follow. Thank you.

I am vehemently opposed to renewing Major League Softball's (MLS) contract.

MLS has run the softball leagues extremely poorly the last five years. They have made changes that are in their best interest of generating income for their company, not in the best interests of those playing in Culver City Adult Softball leagues.

Here is a list of their deficiencies:

1. One umpire instead of two - They have claimed their one umpire is better trained than those used before and that overall the officiating is better than with one umpire. This is simply not true. Some of the umpires are the same. The new ones certainly have no better understanding of the game, no better eyesight and no better judgment than pre-MLS umpires. One umpire simply can't see the plays that two sets of eyes can see.

Response: At the beginning of agreement, the Managers were polled as to the systems in place. An overwhelming majority of the teams voted for a one-person mechanic system. This system is also used by a majority of the neighboring agencies, including Santa Monica.

2. No extra innings - There are no ties in baseball or softball, except in MLS games. A tie is not a satisfying outcome, even in rec league games. The solution is simple. Start an extra inning with a runner at 2nd base.

Response: Depending on the agency, field space, and time restrictions at certain parks related to the availability of night lighting, sometimes tie-games are unavoidable. That being said, in our experience tie-games are not a regular occurrence.

3. Unbalanced schedules - With the traditional 6 teams in a league, in a 10 game season, each team plays each other twice. MLS routinely puts 5, 7 or 8 teams in a league so some teams have to play really good teams twice and some teams play really bad teams twice. This is not fair. Plus, it creates bye weeks or double headers, which is ridiculous for a rec softball schedule.

Response: Countless programs use five and seven team formats when playing 10 game schedules such that "Byes" are routine. This is not unusual and is certainly not unique to MLS. Most leagues in every sport at every level use Byes and double headers are now commonplace in recreation slow pitch softball leagues. It is also true that we receive countless "bye requests" prior to the start of each season and using a format that includes Byes gives us the ability to accommodate these requests which makes a lot of teams happy.

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Schedule changes well into a season. MLS constantly changes league schedules many weeks into the season. Many players make plans in advance based on the schedule. When it is changed routinely, it becomes difficult to field a team. Some of these changes have been made the day before the game which definitely affects the ability to field a team.

Response: Schedules are adjusted due to weather or forfeits. It is our experience that the majority of managers are satisfied with the league schedules.

4. Team changes well into a season. MLS moves teams around leagues during the season, and not just after the first game or two. This screws up the schedule and results in an unbalance schedule as a very good team may move up to a better league, but its record in beating a team or two in their old league remains with some teams not having played the team that is moved up to a better league.

Response: Periodic adjustments may occur when teams are not properly placed in the correct division due to inaccurate self-rating or major changes in rosters from one season to another. As a comparison, City of Santa Monica states changes can be made one-third to one-half way through the season.

5. Scorekeeping – One of the features MLS sells is its scorekeeping statistics. The scorekeepers have so little knowledge of the players or the game that these feature is meaningless. We have players with good batting averages in the statistics who haven't played for our team in years.

Response: It is the responsibility of the Managers to submit correct information of changes during the game. Errors can take place when communication is not clear. City staff actively encourages open and clear communication between each of our contractors and program participants.

6. Liability – MLS does not carry liability insurance for players. MLS had all players sign a waiver when they took over 5 years ago. No new player has signed a waiver since, yet MLS acts as if every player has signed a waiver. A player from our team was suspended a few years ago when a home run ball he hit broke a car windshield. This was an indigent player on a scholarship because he couldn't afford league fees who had not signed a waiver.

Response: MLS meets all of the insurance requirements mandated by the City of Culver City.

7. Laziness – Enrique has indicated that it is too much trouble for the scorekeepers to push a button so the scoreboard reflects the current number of outs, so sometimes outs are simply not displayed on the scoreboard. I understand there is not a need to display balls and strikes, but the number of outs is important and literally takes a fraction of a second to register.

Response: Accusations towards individuals will not be addressed. The league and staff continue to work together to resolve personnel matters as they arise.