

## League

Continued from Page 14

league, games are held from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. But taking a page from his baseball past, Padilla Sr. insisted games go the standard nine innings.

According to Padilla Jr., of the 14 games he's played this season only two have not gone the full nine. He maintains that in the lower divisions, 85-to-90 percent of the games end before nine innings.

"In the lower divisions where the pitching produces more walks, the games may be a bit shorter," he says. "But for the most part, you're going to get your game in. I've seen games this year go the full nine with scores of 2-0 or 5-3. Those are great games."

Because of the plethora of teams and different talent levels, the modified league has been split into five divisions — A-E — marking descending talent. Teams play an average of 21 games from March to November. The first four teams in each division qualify for the playoffs, with championships decided in a double-elimination A vs. B and C through E format. To make it a little easier in the "E" Division, teams are separated into two groups.

Regardless of how teams finish, all players are invited to a season-ending awards ceremony and dance. A portion of league fees includes a ticket to the softball soiree.

Now you might think teams which have been trying to knock each other's heads off all year might be looking to do the same at the all-you-can-drink affair. But Padilla happily reports that league-mandated decorum stretches to the post-season party. "The guys who won it get cheers and pats on the back from the teams they beat," notes Padilla Jr., who works as an office manager for a medical group in Hollywood. "It's a pretty good crowd and even though it's diverse, they all get along."

Diverse might be the understatement of the century. Among the teams of policemen, firemen and city officials are two squads from an organization called, The Young People of Watts. This group helps get ex-gang members and ex-cons off the street

and into gainful employment. It also opens its roster to anyone who can hit and field.

"Even though they may have had a rough life in the past, they do their best to come out on Sunday and have some fun," Padilla explains. "It's interesting to watch police officers playing softball against a team of ex-cons."

Although Padilla says the league loses an average of three teams a year, they gain five in return by virtue of reputation alone. "People look forward to playing every Sunday because the league is so organized," Padilla Jr. notes.

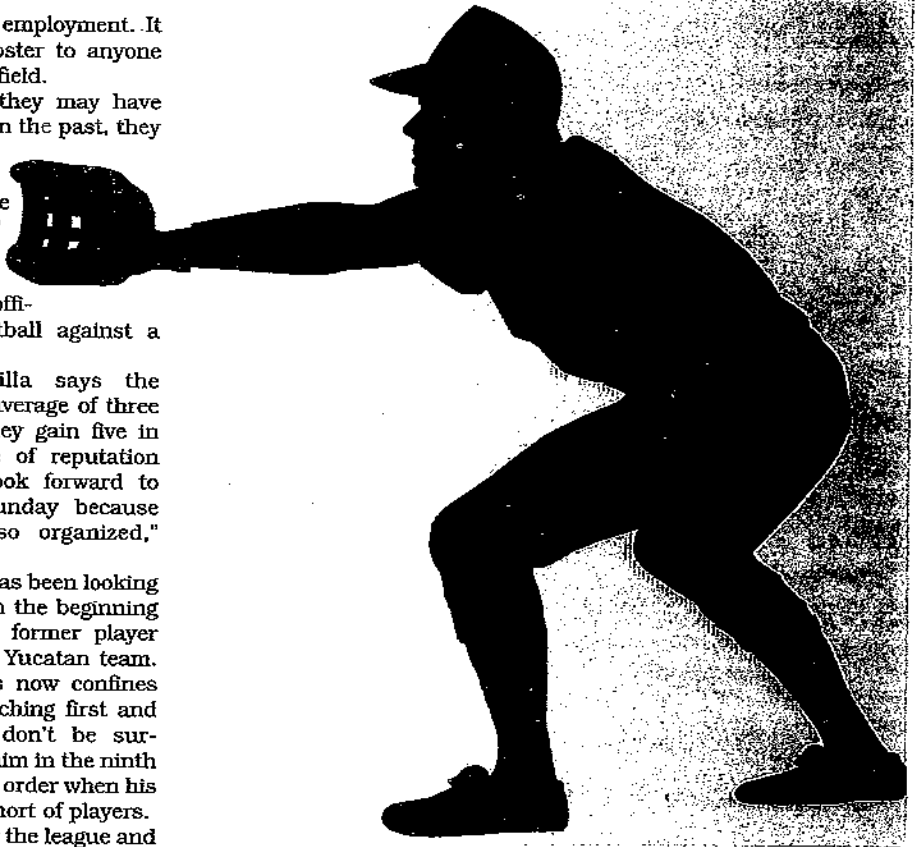
One man who has been looking forward to it from the beginning is Rene Frias, a former player from the original Yucatan team. In his 70s, Frias now confines his duties to coaching first and third. However, don't be surprised if you see him in the ninth slot in the batting order when his team comes up short of players.

It is this love for the league and its principles which have kept the core group united through 26 years and a host of changes. Padilla Sr.'s Chrome Nickel Plating team, Avalos, Mixed Blood and a squad honoring Frank Alvarez continue to remind newcomers that the strength of this league lies in its founding ideals.

"I'm proud of what my father has accomplished," Padilla Jr. notes. "So many players have told me that 'if it wasn't for your dad and the league I don't know what I'd be doing on Sundays.' We are the most organized league in Los Angeles and perhaps all of Southern California. Our league promotes a good family environment with good fields and good parks where everybody can enjoy themselves. That's why we've been successful and that's why people want to join us."

Arturo Padilla Sr. never dreamed a three-team neighborhood league would come to this. But then, 600 softball players never dreamed of finding a professionally run league with a neighborhood feel.

For more information on the Latin & American Men's Softball League, call (323) 566-3551. ☺



## A thru Z Softball Halloween Havoc

October 28-29  
Sacramento Softball Complex



Play with the best, USSSA  
Best awards of 2000

**Divisions:**  
Mens 'C'  
(5 home runs)  
Mens 'D'  
(2 home runs)  
Mens Novice  
(0 home runs)  
Coed 'D' & below  
(1 home run)

**Particulars:**  
\$195 Entry Fee  
Double Elimination  
Courtesy runners okay  
No team jumping

**Monster Awards:**  
1<sup>st</sup> thru 3<sup>rd</sup> Individual &  
sponsor awards  
All tournament & MVP award  
Plays of the day awards  
Best COSTUME of the day  
Special Kids giveaways

Don't be left in the dark, contact:

Jay Zetz (916) 338-5108  
(916) 832-2288

Mail checks to: A thru Z  
6667 Foxwood Ct.  
Sacramento, CA. 95841

