

BASU Umpire-in-Chief Report 2015

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Tournaments

We covered over 20 tournaments with 15 different Crew Chiefs in 2015, six of whom were new to crew-chiefing.

The biggest requirements in 2015 were again for the Diamond Series held at Farnham Park in Slough. We were a little short of numbers this year, but there were no major issues to report.

All regional tournaments were covered successfully, also with no manning problems to report.

National tournaments again went well again, with most games at the Premier Nationals covered with two-man systems. We were a little more stretched than in previous years due to all of the Co-ed National Championship grades being played at the same time. The date also clashed with some European tournaments, so we were missing a few of our more experienced umpires. However, the three Crew Chiefs assigned to the different Nationals did a good job, covering all the games.

The London Cup Women's Fastpitch Tournament, run by BSUK with support from the BSF, had probably the best crew we have managed to assemble in recent years, with three overseas ESF-qualified umpires, three UK ESF-qualified umpires and two UK-based ISF-qualified umpires present. With all the social media posts written during and after the tournament, I received several requests from other ESF umpires interested in officiating at the 2016 London Cup.

BASU overseas

Lesley Morisetti, Darrell Pitman and Hans Daanen represented BASU at the ESF Slowpitch Championships in Dupnitsa, Bulgaria. Lesley and Darrell were both first-time attendees and did very well.

Pete Saunders went to Canada to represent us in the Canadian Men's Slowpitch Championships. It was a level of softball he wouldn't have experienced in the UK, but Pete made the transition very successfully and received a very good tournament assessment.

Jana McCaskill was selected for the European Women's Premier Cup in the Czech Republic. I received very positive feedback from her Umpire-in-Chief, and she is expected to progress at this level.

Bridget Cameron was selected to represent us at an ESF tournament, but unfortunately the dates clashed with the WBSC Junior Women's World Championships in Oklahoma City, and the world tournament took precedence. Unsurprisingly, Bridget got a very good assessment and I am sure she will be considered for more WBSC Softball Division tournaments this year.

I had the pleasure of representing BASU at the Men's Super Cup in Prague, and it was an experience!

Unfortunately, David Hurley had to pull out of his ESF assignment for personal reasons, so did not have any international duties.

General comments

Slowpitch umpiring continues to progress, with ever more people attending BASU umpiring courses in all regions apart from London. This is something we will look to address before the start of the 2016 season.

Fastpitch umpiring had a boost in 2015, with our more experienced ESF/ISF umpires making a commitment to officiate in as many Great Britain Fastpitch League games as they could. However, with Jana and Bridget living in Scotland, and the other fastpitch umpires heavily involved with slowpitch events, we didn't always manage to cover all the games. We will try to get a firm commitment from all our fastpitch umpires early in the 2016 season to avoid a repeat of this scenario.

On a negative note, three of our newly-qualified ESF umpires failed to make the necessary commitment to qualify for ESF tournaments in the 2016 season. I hope they will choose to adhere to the qualification criteria for the 2017 season. We also lost Hans Daanen as a UK-based ESF umpire, as he has returned to Holland due to work commitments. We hope to see him representing the Dutch Softball Association this year!

The BASU Committee continues to promote us in the most positive manner possible. There have been a couple of changes to the Committee again this year, due to members struggling to commit the time required to execute their responsibilities. I am confident the people taking on Committee positions in the coming year will do as good a job as those standing down.

We can only continue to build on our achievements of the past few years with the support and feedback of our members. If any of you feel you would like to do more to help promote umpiring nationally or locally, or within the Committee, please feel free to contact any member of the Committee to discuss. We are all approachable (I hope!) and happy to discuss any issues you have, or refer you to the best person to help if we are unable to answer your questions ourselves. We always give every request/grievance due consideration before responding formally.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy new year on and off the diamond!