BSF EXECUTIVE MEETING REPORT:  
11 JUNE 2020

The BSF Executive held its latest meeting by video conference on the evening of Thursday 11 June 2020. Below is a journalistic account of the main discussions and decisions.

Attendance

**Present:** Jenny Fromer (President), Laura Burkhardt (Treasurer), Liz Graham (Competition Officer), Alexis Markham-Hill (National Teams Officer), Mike Lott (Coaching Officer), Chris Moon (Technical Officer), Mike Jennings and Steve Getraer (General Officers), Bob Fromer (Administrator).

**Apologies:** Stella Ackrell (General Officer).

Finance

BSF Treasurer Laura Burkhardt told the Executive that with the ESF having returned all entry fees for cancelled tournaments, and with a £20,000 grant from Sport England having been received, the BSF currently has around £40,000 in the bank and not too many immediate liabilities.

This should enable the BSF to end its financial year on 30 September in better shape than originally anticipated, and the Executive has made the decision that even if some play becomes possible later this summer, no team registrations will be required or affiliation fees charged in 2020.

This could mean that cash flow may still be tight early in 2021 because the BSF will have significant expenditures to make next year before affiliation fees – assuming a normal season – begin to be received in May.

It is likely that affiliation fees will have to rise next year to help the BSF regain reserves after a year in which we have had significant spending but no membership income, but the expectation is that most leagues will understand this. Jenny Fromer reported that League Heads she has talked to have been positive about how the BSF has handled financial aspects of the Covid-19 crisis and understand the reasons for expenditure this year.

BSF Development Grants

Because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on BSF finances, the BSF Executive has decided that it is unable to receive any further applications for BSF Development Grants for the remainder of 2020.

It is hoped that the programme can resume in 2021 and that applications can be made once the new year begins. An announcement on this will be made later this year.
**Return to play possibilities**

Most if not all BSF leagues have cancelled their formal league seasons (in London, Regents Park has cancelled all bookings until August) and the BSF has cancelled NSL play for 2020 and all National Championships.

The only weekend tournaments that might still take place are those scheduled for late in the season, and even those are in doubt.

Nevertheless, the BSF and many leagues and teams hope that some play might still be possible this season, however informal, if the country can avoid a second spike in coronavirus cases and government regulations continue to ease to the point where team sport can resume. For leagues, this might be friendly games involving teams or individual players willing to play.

Meanwhile, the BSF is looking at the possibility of holding a weekend of co-ed slowpitch play at Farnham Park in September, possibly two one-day tournaments back-to-back for up to 12 teams on each day, providing that regulations allow that many people to be together at the same time and that adequate safety measures can be put in place regarding playing protocols, food, toilet facilities etc.

The BSF Executive will draw up a plan for such an event, working with BaseballSoftballUK and others, and will let the community know if it looks like it can go ahead.

**BSF video conference with League Heads**

Over the past couple of months, the BSF has received a steady stream of questions from leagues and teams about the present and future impact of the pandemic on the sport. The BSF Executive is now planning to hold an evening video conference with League Heads on Monday 6 July to answer questions about what might be able to happen this season and to begin to think jointly about how to bring softball back in 2021.

League Heads will be asked to send in questions before the meeting so the Executive can be in the best position to answer them.

**Slowpitch World Cup**

BSF General Officer and ESF Competitions Director Mike Jennings has been working on a set of regulations for staging the first WBSC Slowpitch World Cup – a world championship competition for national teams – due to take place in 2021. The idea is to develop regulations which maintain the principles involved in staging WBSC competitions while keeping costs as low as possible for organisers and participating teams.
The regulations will be circulated for comments to officials from Softball Europe and the American Amateur Softball Association (who are expected to host the tournament in Florida) as well as some participating teams, after which a final version will be sent to the WBSC for approval.

That would clear the way for concrete plans to hold the tournament to go ahead.

**WBSC tournament sanctions**

As previously reported, the WBSC appears to require that all “ unofficial” or “ invitational” tournaments held around the world require their sanction, and the BSF has begun the rather cumbersome process of getting WBSC sanction to hold the Softball World Series Tournament this September (if possible).

The WBSC has expressed concern that while some genuine national slowpitch teams take part in the tournament, other teams call themselves by the names of countries when they are not in fact national teams. These teams do not wear national team uniforms or logos, but it remains to be seen whether the WBSC will insist that they change their name.

**ESCA Coach Ambassador**

The ESF is asking each national federation in Europe to appoint an official Ambassador to ESCA, the European Softball Coaches Association.

One key task of the Ambassadors will be to grow the number of coaches in each country who become ESCA members, with the idea that, according to ESF Secretary-General Ami Baran, “the growing numbers will turn our Coaches Association into one of the top coaching groups in the world and with the growing membership we will be able to conduct clinics, conferences and much more.”

The BSF Executive will canvass possibilities and appoint an Ambassador shortly. ESCA’s work and support for coaches includes slowpitch as well as fastpitch.

**GB Management Committee**

The GB Management Committee (GBMC) was effectively suspended late last year by the BSF because it was no longer functioning, and GBMC matters have been dealt with since then by members of the BSF Executive and principally the National Teams Officer, Alexis Markham-Hill.

The suspension of international softball and national team activities this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic has provided some breathing room to reconstitute the GBMC, and Alexis will be approaching a number of people over the next few weeks about formally joining the Committee.

Once re-constituted, the GBMC will meet with members of the BSF Executive (in person if possible, otherwise by video conference), to discuss and agree on some basic principles with regard to the operation of national team programmes, including support for British-based athletes in those programmes.
These principles will be further discussed at the annual meeting of the GBMC with national team staff members, usually held in the autumn.

Next meeting

The next BSF Executive meeting will take place via video conference on the evening of Thursday 9 July.

Anyone with matters to bring to the meeting should contact BSF Administrator Bob Fromer. (bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org).