

BSUK AND THE BSF

Questions arise from time to time about the roles and responsibilities of BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK) compared to those of the British Softball Federation (BSF). This article is an attempt to shed some light on the subject.

Definitions and Structure

The British Softball Federation is the National Governing Body (NGB) for all formats and disciplines of the sport of softball in the United Kingdom. The BSF is a company limited by guarantee.

BaseballSoftballUK is a company limited by guarantee, with the British Softball Federation as its Member. The British Baseball Federation (BBF) was a Member of BSUK in the past but is not currently, though BSUK continues to carry out services on behalf of baseball.

As the sole member of BSUK, the BSF may nominate two Directors to serve on the BSUK Board. Normally, one of these nominations is the serving BSF President. The BSUK Board consists of an independent Chair, the CEO (as an ex officio Director) and up to eight further Directors, most of whom are recruited on a skills basis.

British Softball Federation (BSF)

The BSF's purpose is to govern, regulate and standardise softball across the country, as the designated National Governing Body (NGB) for softball, recognised as such by the British Sports Councils and by the International Federation, the World Baseball and Softball Confederation (WBSC).

Domestically, the BSF governs the playing of the game by its member leagues and teams, organises the National Softball League and National Championships, and coordinates the softball tournament calendar. It is also responsible for umpire certification, which it delegates to the British Association of Softball Umpires (BASU).

Internationally, the BSF is responsible for putting out national teams in all age groups and formats of the sport, delegating the support and oversight of national teams to its GB Management Committee (GBMC). While the BSF holds the primary membership of and relationship with the International Federation, this work is supported by BSUK's performance programme (see below).

BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK)

BSUK is the national development and performance agency for baseball and softball in the United Kingdom. It is the accountable body for safeguarding baseball and softball, and for government investment from UK Sport and Sport England into the sports.

The agency's purpose is to increase participation, make the sports more inclusive, improve

the overall playing experience, and drive elite performance on the part of national teams, working with and through the National Governing Bodies – the [British Softball Federation](#) and [British Baseball Federation](#).

BSUK's mission is "More people playing baseball and softball in more places" through:

- Targeted participation growth
- Talent development
- Efficient grassroots support services
- Organisational sustainability

BSUK's **development** purpose is to grow participation across the two sports, which it does by supporting existing organisations (clubs and leagues) to be stronger and better organised, by recruiting and educating coaches, by helping to improve the sports' playing facilities, and by running programmes designed to introduce new players to the sports.

One particularly important function delegated to BSUK by the BSF is to provide expertise, advice and policy direction in all matters relating to the safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adult participants in the sport, and to act on behalf of the BSF in reporting, managing and resolving safeguarding issues.

From a **performance** perspective, BSUK is the body accountable to UK Sport for the two Olympic sports of men's baseball and women's fastpitch softball. It has responsibility for the organisation and on-field performance of the senior national teams in these disciplines and for the creation and support of a player pathway leading to them. BSUK also coordinates an International Relations Strategy for baseball and softball, which is funded by UK Sport.

Funding

Sport England and UK Sport (together called "the Sports Councils") recognise BSUK as the body fit to receive investment from the National Lottery and government funds as a single organisation supporting baseball and softball. The Sports Councils place responsibilities on BSUK for delivery against set objectives within funding agreements, including managing their investment and meeting governance and financial standards.

BSUK has three main funding partners:

- **Sport England.** BSUK has secured investment from Sport England for 2022-2027. The award acknowledges BSUK's critical role as a System Partner in aligning with Sport England's [Uniting the Movement](#) strategy to increase activity levels, especially across under-represented communities.
- **UK Sport** has awarded £465,000 for the Paris Olympic Cycle for the baseball and softball Olympic national teams in recognition of the performance trajectory of these programmes.
- The **Mayor of London's Office** has invested £200,000 in BSUK to deliver Legacy Programmes in London surrounding the MLB London Series through to 2026.

This funding supports a paid staff of 13 people working across the three areas of Development, Operations, and Performance.

The BSF is funded almost entirely from its annual membership income and is run by a volunteer Executive Board of up to 12 people elected by its member teams. Currently, the BSF employs a paid Administrator on a part-time basis.

What does BSUK do?

BSUK's main areas of responsibility in carrying out its role of promoting and developing softball and baseball in the UK are:

- Youth and schools development programmes.
- Creating new adult and youth clubs and teams.
- Development of the sports in universities.
- Maintenance of player pathways and the running of Academies.
- Club accreditation, support, and development.
- Coach development.
- Volunteer workforce development.
- Promotion of the sports to potential participants.
- Facility development (Farnham Park and beyond).
- Safeguarding and equality policy, procedures and associated programmes.
- Management of the MLB Legacy Programme.

The fact that BSUK has the main responsibility for development programmes and activities does not prevent the BSF from carrying out development activities of its own, often in consultation with BSUK. In addition, BSUK carries out other functions on behalf of the BSF, including:

- Press/PR activities.
- Some website content provision.
- Management of BSF social media accounts.
- Support with the management of insurance provision.
- Event support.
- Ensuring that the BSF meets required governance standards.

What does the BSF do?

The main roles carried out by the BSF Executive are:

- Management and oversight of competition structures for affiliated clubs and teams.
- Organisation of National Championships.
- Management and oversight of national team programmes.
- Affiliation to relevant international bodies.

- Organisation and management of Federation meetings.
- Management and audit of Federation budgets.
- Purchase, management and storage of Federation equipment.
- Provision and enforcement of rules and regulations (including discipline in relation to affiliated teams or clubs).

Who does what for whom?

The practical application of the delegation of roles between BSUK and the BSF can be seen in the following examples:

What do you want to talk about?	Who should you talk to?
National Championships	BSF
Umpire training	BASU or the BSF or Softball Leagues
Support for new teams in existing leagues	BSF or Softball Leagues
National teams and GB trials and training	BSF
Team membership fees	BSF
Playing rules	BSF
Illegal bats	BSF or BASU
Questions involving the WBSC or WBSC Europe	BSF
Softball Calendar	BSF
Small development grants (up to £300)	BSF
National Softball League	BSF
Great Britain Fastpitch League	The League or BSF
Disciplinary issues	BSF
Putting articles on the BSF website	BSF and/or BSUK
Coach training and courses	BSUK
The Academy and High Performance Academy	BSUK
Welfare (safeguarding) policy or issues	BSUK
Building or improving playing facilities	BSUK
Bookings at Farnham Park	BSUK
Supporting new development teams or leagues	BSUK

Club support and training	BSUK
Facilities grants	BSUK
University softball	BSUK
Support for corporate softball events	BSUK
Youth and schools development	BSUK