



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BRITISH SOFTBALL FEDERATION

This is the official Notification and Information Pack for the 2023 British Softball Federation Annual General Meeting, which will be held remotely as a videoconference meeting.

Venue:

The 2023 BSF AGM will be a remote meeting using Google Hangout. The formal AGM (see Agenda below) will be the sole business of the meeting, and there will be no workshops or other additional sessions.

A League Heads Forum remote meeting will be held before the AGM, on Thursday 16 February 2023.

AGM Date:

Saturday 25 February 2023
2.00-4.00 pm

Meeting Link:

See Joining Instructions below.

Responses to AGM Pack Content:

If there are any matters in this AGM Pack that you wish to raise at the AGM, please communicate this no later than Monday 20 February to BSF Administrator Bob Fromer: bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org.

AGM JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

To join the 2023 BSF AGM, please use the following link:

<https://meet.google.com/bej-kjsn-ays>

Note: You can test out this link in advance of the meeting. Ideally, the link should be pasted into a Chrome browser, which should work particularly well for anyone with a gmail email account.

Meeting instructions

Due to the technical challenges of holding this meeting remotely, we ask that during the meeting you remain muted unless and until you wish to speak.

Questions can be raised either by using the 'Raise your Hand' function or by posting questions in the Chat function, which will be monitored throughout the meeting.

In order to manage voting we will use a Google Form that can be accessed by all through the chat function. By completing this form your vote will remain anonymous to all except the President and the person tabulating the votes.

Patience please!

Please bear with us if we experience technical difficulties or if it is hard to address all questions and comments during the meeting. Despite the experience we have all had of remote meetings over the past few years, holding a meeting of this size can be tricky, and we will do our best to manage it as efficiently and painlessly as possible.

Any questions that are not responded to at the meeting will be addressed afterwards.

We will be recording the meeting and will be happy to provide a copy on request.

AGM ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Since we had a full season of play in 2022, normal AGM attendance requirements will apply for the 2023 AGM. Attendance is required by:

- All NSL1 and NSL2 teams.
- All slowpitch softball leagues that wish to send teams to National Championships at any level.
- All 2022 league divisional winners that wish to take up the place they have earned in the 2023 Co-ed Slowpitch League Nationals at the appropriate grade.
- All teams that won their grade (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze) at the 2022 Co-ed Slowpitch League Nationals if they wish to be guaranteed a place in the 2023 League Nationals as defending champions.

Please note that, in general, a league representative cannot also represent a team at the AGM. However, a League Head who is a registered playing member of a team from their league that has won a place in the 2023 BSF Co-ed Slowpitch League Nationals **can** represent both the league and that team. But such a person will only have one vote, not two.

If you want to represent both your league and team at the AGM, please let BSF Competitions Officer [Liz Graham](#) know beforehand.

IMPORTANT: When you attend the remote AGM, please ensure that your name and the name of the team or league you are representing is on the screen so we can collate attendance.

BSF AGM 2023: AGENDA

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REPORT FROM THE 2022 BSF AGM

The British Softball Federation held its **2022 Annual General Meeting** as a remote meeting on the afternoon of Saturday 26 February, with a total of 69 people in attendance, including nine members of the BSF Executive and three BSUK staff members.

With the Covid-19 pandemic seeming to be largely behind us, the general feeling at the AGM was that people were looking forward to a full season of domestic and international play in the summer.

A total of 56 voting forms were returned during the meeting, which included votes cast to elect Officers to the BSF Executive and to approve Minutes from the 2021 AGM, the 2020-21 Accounts and 2021-22 Budget, and proposed team affiliation fees for 2022.

The meeting, which included the announcement of the BSF's Annual Awards for the 2021 season and the names of 11 new members to be inducted into the BSF Hall of Fame, took less than 90 minutes to complete and included virtually no discussion of any items by those in attendance.

The BSF held a remote AGM in 2021 to comply with Covid-19 restrictions, and again this year because when plans for the meeting were being made, some restrictions were still in place and the threat posed by the Omicron variant was unclear.

Assuming that life moves forward without further pandemic restrictions, the BSF will need to consider whether to continue with remote AGMs in future now that the technology to do this is tried and tested. On the one hand, a remote AGM saves everyone involved a lot of time and money; on the other hand, it seems to restrict discussion and debate and makes the AGM a largely pro-forma affair. To help decide what kind of AGM to hold in future, the BSF Executive may conduct a poll of members at some point later this year.

Election of Officers

All nine candidates for Officer positions on the BSF Executive were unopposed, and all were elected either unanimously or with overwhelming majorities, with a total of just five "None of the Above" votes cast across all candidates. The BSF Executive for 2022 will be:

President: Ieuan Gale

Treasurer: Laura Burkhardt

Competitions & Membership Officer: Liz Graham

Technical Officer: Pete Saunders

Coaching Officer: Michael Lott

Communications and Marketing Officer: Simon Mortimer

Safeguarding Officer: Stella Ackrell

General Officer/Insurance: Mike Jennings

General Officer/Competitions Support: Lesley Morisetti

The first three positions listed are Directors of BSF Ltd.

The position of **National Teams Officer** is currently vacant and the BSF will attempt to fill this important position by co-option.

The **BSF Administrator** – a position currently held by Bob Fromer – is a part-time paid position and is not subject to election.

The **BSF/BSUK Fastpitch Development Manager** – a position currently held by Alyson Spinis-Valainis – has been a full-time paid role shared between the BSF and BaseballSoftballUK and appointed by a joint panel made up of members from both organisations. However, from 1 April 2022, BSUK will take on sole responsibility for supporting this role.

Other votes

With regard to other matters on the voting form, the Minutes of the 2021 AGM were approved with three abstentions; the BSF's 2020-21 Accounts and proposed 2021-22 Budget were approved with four abstentions; and team affiliation fees for the 2022 season, which included a small rise for the first time in several years, were approved with three abstentions.

BSF Treasurer Laura Burkhardt told AGM attendees that the BSF had a budget surplus of over £13,000 in 2020-21 against a projected loss of around £3,000, largely because of an emergency Sport England Covid grant and the fact that no national teams competed abroad during the 2021 season.

This allowed the Federation to rebuild its reserves in 2021 back to around £43,000.

For 2021-22, the Budget approved by the AGM projects a planned deficit of almost £17,000, which will take reserves back down to around £26,000, less than what they need to be. The Budget includes a conservative estimate of the number of affiliated teams in 2022, and the deficit could be mitigated to some extent if team numbers bounce back to near pre-pandemic levels, which some (but not all) leagues are predicting.

Nevertheless, the BSF may need further fee increases in future to build reserves back to the level that good governance principles require, a strategy supported during the AGM by former BSF President Jenny Fromer.

BASU report

The AGM included a brief report from BSF Technical Officer and BASU Training Officer Pete Saunders.

Pete told the meeting that the standard BASU Qualification Course was now available online, in the form of four blocks of modules plus an online tutorial session after each block and then a field day at the end for assessment – a process which takes about eight weeks. Five leagues are currently running the course, three more are interested and feedback has been good. Already,

more than twice the number of people are being trained this year than in 2019, the last “normal” year before the pandemic.

The online modules are available for anyone to watch free of charge; you don’t have to be a trainee umpire to do this! Anyone interested should contact Pete for the links.

Pete also reported that new WBSA Rulebooks for 2022-25 for both fastpitch and slowpitch will soon be published, but with no major rule changes.

Finally, he referred AGM attendees to the [BSF website article](#) on bat certification for clarity on which bats would be eligible for play this year in the UK and abroad.

BSUK section

The BaseballSoftballUK section of the AGM, presented by Head of Fundraising & Partnerships Joelle Watkins, Deputy Head of Development Leah Holmes and Gary Anderson, Head of Performance Systems, covered five main areas:

- BSUK’s Development Charter
- An update on developments at Farnham Park
- Slowpitch and Fastpitch Development Plans
- Return to Play updates
- National team development

Presentations on the first three topics were made at the remote BSF League Heads Forum held on 20 February and were reported in the [website article](#) on the Forum.

Return to Play. With all government Covid restrictions having been removed in England, Joelle Watkins told the meeting that no measures were now required with regard to softball play, but the recommendation from both BSUK and the BSF was that caution should still be observed. A participant register could still be useful so that people could be contacted if anyone playing at the event went down with Covid, and minimal hygiene measures around shared equipment could help prevent transmission.

National team development. This section of BSUK’s presentation was delivered by Gary Anderson, who has recently been hired, through UK Sport funding for the GB Senior Women’s Fastpitch and Men’s Baseball Teams, in a part-time role as Head of Performance Systems.

Gary has worked in a number of sports over the course of a long career in performance sport and has taken teams from both summer and winter sports to the Olympics. “My role”, Gary said, “is to ensure that softball and baseball deliver on UK Sport’s performance objectives, and what UK Sport is looking for is medal success.”

Working with newly-appointed Performance Management Groups for both softball and baseball, Gary is currently carrying out a Performance Pathway Review which will include the launch of redesigned Academy programmes for both sports. The underlying objective is to identify, recruit and develop appropriate athletes.

The GB Women's Team came within one game of qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics, but Gary is also undertaking a Gap Analysis with regard to the team's ability to qualify for and medal at the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. How far away are we from being able to achieve that, and how can we develop a strategy to close the gap?

This year, Gary said, with success at the Women's European Championship as a Key Performance Indicator for the team, we can begin to implement our strategy. But it's only six years until the LA Olympics, and that time will fly by.

In answer to a question, Gary said that while it had not yet been officially confirmed that baseball/softball would be on the Olympic programme in Los Angeles, a decision was expected soon – and he would be very surprised if this wasn't the case.

Annual Awards and Hall of Fame Inductions

The AGM ended with an official announcement of the winners of BSF Annual Awards based on the 2021 season and of 11 individuals who have been elected to the BSF Hall of Fame in 2022.

Mention was also made of three members from the British softball community who were given coaching awards at the 2022 BSUK Coach Summit, and three members who were inducted into the Softball Europe Hall of Fame at the recent WBSC Europe Congress in Slovenia.

The names of all these award winners are given below, but details about their achievements can be found in [this article](#) on the BSF website.

ANNUAL AWARD WINNERS

Glover Cup: Ian Tomlin

League Glover Cup: Great Britain Fastpitch League (GBFL)

President's Club Award: The Mix (GBFL)

Umpire of the Year: Chris Lunn

Tournament of the Year: BSUK Slowpitch Cup

Youth Team of the Year: Archway Thunder (Stroud, Glos)

Betsy Holden Award: Megan Rollins

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Players

Dan Spinks

Steve Hazard

Roger Grooms

Amy Moore

Player and Coach

David Lee

Coaches

Rachael Watkeys

Jim and Karen Murray

Development Achievement

Julie Spittle

Administration and Organisation Achievement

Jenny Fromer

2022 BSUK COACHING AWARDS

Softball Youth Coach of the Year: Holly Ireland

Softball Adult Coach of the Year: Trevor Sykes

Services to Coaching: Ian Tomlin

SOFTBALL EUROPE HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Players

Brett Gibbens

Stephanie Jardine

Umpire

Chris Moon

Brett and Steph are the first two slowpitch players to be inducted into the European Hall of Fame, and Chris Moon is the first slowpitch umpire.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ieuan Gale

Another season done, and another year of successes in the bag! With Covid now firmly in the rearview mirror as far as restrictions on playing our great game go, we were able to get back to doing what we love most, playing as much as possible!

At home, we saw great success in our domestic leagues, perhaps most highlighted by H2O's victory in the NSL1 National Championship, 17 years in the making! It was a true testament to the hard work and determination by those involved, but also, and perhaps more importantly, their long-term dedication to our great sport and community. Kellie, Steve, and most of all Roger, we take our hats off to you!

Some of our fastpitch club teams also saw success on the international stage, with The Mix journeying to Italy to compete in the European Women's Cup, and the Stags making their debut at the European Men's Super Cup. The Mix had an up and down week but ultimately played brilliantly and just fell short in the bronze medal game. The Stags also played excellent softball, which allowed them to finish higher than any other British men's club team in at least a decade. Congratulations to both teams for what they have been able to achieve in a few short years in raising the standard and awareness of British fastpitch softball both at home and overseas.

While we are on the subject of fastpitch development, our colleagues at BSUK have finally unveiled their national Fastpitch Development Plan. With some exciting aims and ambitions in the Plan, we in the BSF look forward to seeing those development ambitions come to fruition in the UK over the next few years. While this macro-level development unfolds, at the micro level it was great to see the continued expansion and development of the Great Britain Fastpitch League this year. The level of competition and numbers of participants has never been higher, and this will continue into 2023 as well, with new teams joining and the expansion of the youth division expected.

Of course, we can't talk about development without mentioning slowpitch development as well. Our colleagues at BSUK have also unveiled their national Slowpitch Development Plan, which has some very exciting visions for the future. The BSF is keen to see these ambitions delivered.

This comes alongside the continued growth and development of the NSL. The league will continue to expand in 2023 as NSL3 moves from eight to 12 teams, and there are hopes for an NSL4 in 2024 as the league continues to engage more and more of our community.

It has been great to see the effects of the continued development of our sports, in particular with the successes of our national teams.

First, GB Slowpitch had another brilliant season in 2022, further solidifying us as the undisputed European slowpitch powerhouse nation. The GB Men's Slowpitch Team had to dig deep and battle hard to defend their European title, but despite huge pressure they bent but did not break and came out on top in an absolutely thrilling gold medal game against The Netherlands

by 47-31, in what many have called one of the greatest international slowpitch softball games that Europe has seen.

The GB Co-ed Slowpitch Team had an even better European Championship, smashing their way through most of the competition and going undefeated in their European title defence. By winning a gold medal they also succeeded in qualifying for the first ever WBSC Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup, scheduled to be held in November 2023. This is a huge achievement and a historic moment! Huge congratulations to our GB Slowpitch programme!

GB Fastpitch also had an excellent international season.

The Men's programme had an exciting year in 2022 after being unable to compete in the 2021 European Championship due to Covid travel restrictions. This began when the Swedish National Team was hosted in a three-game WBSC-sanctioned series held at Farnham Park at the end of May, the first international softball hosted in the UK for several years. This was a roaring success, with the GB Senior Men coming away with all three wins and creating a platform for 2023, when the team will be playing in its first European Championship since 2018. We wish them the best of luck!

The newly-formed GB Under-23 Men's Team competed in the inaugural European Under-23 Men's Championship and played very well considering it was a new squad. They got to the bronze medal game before losing in heart-breaking fashion to Israel, but Head Coach Richard Brown received many compliments on his team's performance, with many of our opponents saying that this was the best Junior Men's side that GB has ever put out. Congratulations to the players, for whom the future is looking bright.

The GB Women's fastpitch programme also had a very successful year. The Under-13 GB Cubs competed at the European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy, finishing fourth. The Under-15 squad, through no fault of their own (an administrative catastrophe on the part of the BSF, which has since been resolved, with processes updated and staff stepping down) were unable to compete officially in their European Championship but were able to play unofficial games against the other nations present and finished with a very admirable 3-5 record. The GB Under-22 Women competed at their European Championship and finished a little lower than we would have hoped at ninth, but considering all the disruptions to the programme in recent years, this was a great performance. Well done to all our young women in the GB Women's programme: we look forward to seeing your continued development and success!

Finally, for the Senior Women's Team, what a year! In the aftermath of new UK Sport funding BSUK was able to hire a Performance Director for the programme in Gary Anderson, and with this key hiring the team went from strength to strength, bringing in new elite support staff. Under this guidance, the team travelled to Sant Boi, near Barcelona in July to compete in the European Women's Championship. After a fantastic week which saw GB fly through the group stages, beat Italy for the first time ever at senior level, and reach the gold medal game with a game to spare, the players found themselves facing the Dutch in the final. Though the team fell just short in that game, they still came away with a silver medal and – more importantly, qualified to play in one of this year's WBSC World Cup Group Stage tournaments, a brilliant start to their LA2028 campaign!

So, what a year it was, and this year looks to be even better. With ongoing development and growth and expansion in all formats, the future looks particularly bright. Good luck to all those teams representing us internationally this year, in particular all three senior teams: the Co-ed Slowpitch Team at the WBSC World Cup, the Men's Fastpitch Team at the European Championship, and last but certainly not least, the Women's Fastpitch Team, which will travel to Dublin for their World Cup Group Stage competition this summer under the new leadership of Head Coach Tara Henry.

I'd also like to take this moment to wish our cousins in British Baseball every success as they take on the United States and others in the World Baseball Classic in Phoenix, Arizona next month, an absolutely amazing achievement, so huge congratulations!

Finally, thank you all for your continued dedication, passion, and hard work within our sport. The British softball community really is something special. The AGM will mark the end of my time as BSF President, but I have no plans to be leaving this amazing community and sport any time soon. So as my official duties draw to a close, I just want to thank you all, and look forward to seeing you on the diamond soon!

COMPETITIONS OFFICER'S REPORT

Liz Graham

2022 BSF Single-Sex Slowpitch Nationals (Organiser: Holly Ireland)

The BSF Single-Sex Slowpitch Nationals returned in 2022 after a three-year gap and were held in Bristol with 19 teams taking part. In future, the plan is to alternate the venue for this tournament between the North and the South, and the 2023 event will be held in Manchester on 10-11 June.

2022 Women's Winners

Platinum: No Balls

Gold: Wetsox (Cardiff)

Silver: Pitchslap (Manchester)

2022 Men's Winners

Gold: Pyros (East Midlands)

Silver: Beerly Legal (Bristol)

2022 Co-Ed Slowpitch League Nationals (Organiser: Matt Tebb)

A total of 18 teams from all around the UK took part in the 2022 BSF Co-ed Slowpitch League National Championships, most of whom had qualified by virtue of placings within their leagues in 2021. The tournament eventually divided into Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze divisions when it came to the fight for trophies. Winners will be invited to the 2023 League Nationals at Farnham Park on the weekend of 12-13 August.

2022 Platinum Winner: Blue Sox (Windsor)

2022 Gold Winner: Archway Thunder (Bristol)

2022 Silver Winner: Sharks (Liverpool)

2022 Bronze Winner: Southport Seagulls (Liverpool)

2022 NSL1 and NSL2 Nationals

The top eight NSL1 and NSL2 teams, based on league play over the summer, contested the NSL National Championships in September.

Tempest scored a hat trick of wins in the NSL2 Nationals, while H2O finally succeeded in their long struggle to win the NSL1 Nationals and will join the Travelling Dodgers at the European Co-ed Slowpitch Super Cup this summer (dates and venue TBC).

The NSL1 and NSL2 Nationals in 2023 will be held on the weekend of 5-6 September at Farnham Park.

NSL1 Nationals Winner: H2O

NSL2 Nationals Winner: Tempest

2022 NSL Overview

Minor changes were put in place during NSL league play in 2022, with some extra time allowed for each league game, which hopefully helped the games gain an extra inning or so.

NSL1 League Winner: H2O

NSL2 League Winner: Spittin' Camels

NSL3 League Winner: Blitz Havoc

Spittin' Camels and Tempest were promoted from NSL2 to NSL1 for the 2023 season, while Mavericks and Blitz Bombers were demoted to NSL2.

Milton Keynes NSL and Blitz Havoc were promoted from NSL3 to NSL2, while SPAM and Bristol Bees were relegated to NSL3.

NSL3 will increase from eight to 12 teams in 2023, competing over three weekends of league play. The BSF hopes that field availability at Farnham Park in 2024 will allow the final level of NSL -- NSL4 -- to get underway with eight teams.

The teams below have qualified for the BSF League National Championships in 2023 by virtue of their league placings in 2022:

League Winners	D1	D2	D3	D4
Bristol	Jets	The Force	Archway Lightning	
Cardiff	Valley Wet Sox	Teirw'r Taf		
East Midlands	Sheriffs & Pyros			
Edinburgh	Souls	Doh'nuts		
Glasgow	Honey Badgers	Chargers		
LSL	MI6	Mouse Rat	Cheetahs	
LSL	Base Invaders	The Mafia	The Mafia / Diamond Dogs	
LASL League	Google	Wagestream	Engine	Fifty Digital
Leeds	Masterbatters			
Liverpool	Sharks			
Manchester	Travelling Dodgers	Meerkats	Bats	Sluggababes
Milton Keynes	Roundabout Rhinos			
Oxford	Spirits			
Publishers	Piranhas			
Solent	Chichester Falcons	Solent Oddballs		
Windsor	Blue Sox	TV Typhoons		

These teams have qualified for the BSF League National Championships in 2023 by winning their division at the 2022 competition.

2022 Winners	Platinum	Blue Sox (Windsor)		
	Gold	Archway Thunder (Bristol)		
	Silver	Sharks (Liverpool)		
	Bronze	Seagulls (Liverpool)		

COACHING OFFICER'S REPORT

Michael Lott

Coaching Resources

There was further development of a BSF Coaches Handbook in 2022, featuring skills and drills that will allow coaches and players to design effective coaching/practice sessions for themselves and their teams.

Bite-size videos for a variety of drills will be published shortly, which will allow the drills to be seen in action along with coaching points for players and coaches to focus on.

The BSF Coaches Facebook group has been set up for players and coaches to share and discuss softball coaching resources (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bsfcoaches/>).

Coach Portal

The BSUK Coach Portal will be launched in 2023, enabling softball coaches to register with BaseballSoftballUK -- the national development agency for the sport. The Portal will be used to manage coaches' attendance on courses and record coaching qualifications achieved.

This will become the main database of qualified coaches that BaseballSoftballUK will engage with to help develop slowpitch and fastpitch softball in the UK.

Coach Education

Two Coach Education courses were delivered in 2022, resulting in eight new Teacher/Activator coaches and 12 new Level 1 coaches.

Three courses have already been scheduled for 2023:

- Kent University, 22 January, 15 Level 1 coaches
- Loughborough University, 19 February, Level 1
- Clifton College Bristol, 12 March, Level 1

Further courses can be delivered where needed. Speak to your local BSUK Development Officer and, if you have any difficulties, please let me know.

NATIONAL TEAMS REPORT: 2022

Bob Fromer sums up how GB national and club teams fared in Europe in 2022 and looks forward to 2023:

GB Softball National Teams returned to international competition in 2022 after a two-year hiatus due to Covid, and the year was marked by some spectacular achievements.

Both the GB Men's and GB Co-ed Slowpitch Teams won gold medals at their European Championships, and the GB Co-ed Slowpitch Team qualified for the first-ever WBSC Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup for national teams, scheduled for November 2023 (venue TBC).

Along with Great Britain, the European contingent at the Slowpitch World Cup will include Germany and the Netherlands, who came second and third respectively at the 2022 Co-ed Slowpitch European Championship.

Another great result was achieved by the GB Senior Women's Fastpitch Team, which won its first nine games at the European Women's Championship, beating both Italy (for the first time ever in official competition) and the Netherlands before losing to the Dutch in the final to earn GB's second-ever silver medal at this event.

The result means that the GB Women qualified, along with the Netherlands and Italy, to compete in one of three WBSC World Cup Group Stage tournaments to be held this summer in Europe. GB will compete in the first of these, to be held from 11-15 July in Dublin, and the six-team tournament will include the USA, Australia and Ireland, along with the second-ranked team to qualify from Africa and the third-ranked team to qualify from Asia at tournaments to be held early this year.

The two other World Cup Group Stage tournaments will be held in Spain and Italy, also in July, and the top two teams from each of the Group Stage tournaments will qualify automatically for the WBSC Women's World Cup Final in 2024.

Results in 2022

Here is how GB national teams fared in European competition in 2022:

The **GB Men's Slowpitch Team** won the gold medal at the first European Men's Slowpitch Championship since the pandemic, played in Colorno, Italy, with six countries competing. GB had to play all three Page Playoff games on the final day to win the trophy and, having lost to The Netherlands 18-12 in the 1v2 game, GB turned up the offense in the semi-final, defeating Germany by 33-13, then took things to new heights in a final for the ages, overcoming The Netherlands by 47-31.

The **GB Co-ed Slowpitch Team** won gold at the European Co-ed Slowpitch Championship in Ljubljana, Slovenia for the 12th time in 13 attempts, defeating Germany in a tense final game and qualifying, along with Germany and The Netherlands, for the 2023 WBSC Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup.

The **GB Senior Women's Fastpitch Team** dominated most of the European Women's Championship in Sant Boi, Spain, winning their first nine games, beating Italy in an official competition for the first time ever and winning convincingly against The Netherlands. GB then lost to The Netherlands in the final but won a European Championship silver medal for only the second time and qualified, along with The Netherlands and Italy, for one of the WBSC Women's World Cup Group Stage tournaments this summer.

The **GB Under-22 Women's Fastpitch Team** had the misfortune to lose a one-run game to France in their first-round group at the European Under-22 Women's Championship in Kunovice, Czechia, that kept them out of the Championship playoffs. After that, the team dominated the playoffs for the lower half of the tournament, winning every game, often by mercy rule, and finishing ninth overall. A number of players from the GB Under-22s then moved on to join the GB Women's Team for their training camp at Bisham Abbey and their successful silver medal campaign at the Women's Europeans.

The recently-formed **GB Under-23 Men's Fastpitch Team** played for the first time in Europe in the first-ever European Under-23 Men's Championship in Sezimovo Usti, Czechia, with a lot at stake. Only four teams were competing in the tournament and two of them would qualify for the WBSC Under-23 Men's World Cup to be played in 2023. The GB Team played excellent softball throughout the tournament, but inexperience on the part of a squad that was almost entirely GB-based made life tough against experienced teams such as Czechia and Denmark, who have dominated European Men's Fastpitch for decades. In the end, GB finished fourth, and Czechia and Israel qualified for the World Cup because Denmark (who finished second) had already announced that they wouldn't take up a place.

The **GB Under-15 Women's Fastpitch Team**, competing for the first time since 2017, was the victim of an unfortunate administrative error by the British Softball Federation, which failed to register their players properly for the tournament on the WBSC Portal. As a result, the team was allowed to play out their schedule at the European Under-15 Women's Championship in Enschede in The Netherlands, but all nine of their games were officially recorded as 7-0 forfeit losses. On the field, a GB team with a mix of experienced and very inexperienced players did very well to win three games, and had their games counted would have finished a very creditable seventh.

The **GB Cubs Under-13 Girls' Fastpitch Team** returned to the Sport Division at the European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy Tournament in Collecchio, Italy with an inexperienced team as the result of their two-year Covid hiatus and finished the four-team tournament without a win but with a huge amount of valuable experience gained.

Here is how British club teams got on in European Cup competitions in 2022:

The Great Britain Fastpitch League (GBFL) Women's Division winners **The Mix**, the only British team to overcome Covid regulations and compete in Europe in 2021, returned to the European Women's Cup in Avigliana, Italy in 2022 and won their last three round-robin games to reach the

bronze medal game, where they fell just short and finished fourth. The Mix have finished second, fifth and fourth at the last three European Women's Cup tournaments, an excellent achievement.

The Great Britain Fastpitch League (GBFL) Men's Division winners **The Stags**, founded in 2019, had their first-ever sojourn in Europe at the European Men's Fastpitch Super Cup in Prague and won one of six games before bowing out of the tournament. But the team displayed a high standard of play at a competition featuring some of the best men's fastpitch teams in Europe, and will be looking to learn from the experience to make more of an impact this year.

International competitions in 2023

Five GB National Teams will compete in European Championship competitions in 2023, while two more will compete in WBSC World Cup events and six British club teams will hopefully compete in European Cup competitions.

The only uncertainty around this is that some European Cup events do not yet have hosts at the time this AGM Pack is being written, though this might have changed by the time the AGM takes place.

Official WBSC competitions for national teams in 2023

The **GB Co-ed Slowpitch Team** will compete in the first-ever WBSC Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup for national teams if a host for the tournament can be found. The 12-team competition will include slowpitch national teams from around the world and is scheduled for November. With the USA and Canada expected to be among the entries, the GB Co-ed Slowpitch Team, perennial European Champions, will have their sternest test since the programme began.

The **GB Senior Women's Fastpitch Team** will compete in one of the three WBSC Women's World Cup Group Stage tournaments this summer from 11-15 July in Dublin, Ireland and will need to finish in the top two of the six-team tournament to qualify automatically for the WBSC Women's World Cup Final in 2024. With both the World Champions USA and Australia in the group, the tournament will give the GB Women the chance to show how much the team has progressed under its new World Class Performance Programme (see below).

Official European competitions for national teams in 2023

The **GB Senior Men's Fastpitch Team** will compete in their first European Championship since 2018, with a squad consisting almost entirely of GB-based players. Twelve teams have entered the competition, one of the largest entries ever. The tournament will be played from 24-29 July in Horsholm, Denmark.

The **GB Under-18 Women's Team** will also be competing in Europe for the first time since 2018 under new Head Coach Tara Tembey. This European Under-18 Women's Championship will be an important part of the pathway that will hopefully produce players for the GB Senior Women's

Team for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. A record number of 21 countries have entered the tournament, which will be held from 31 July-5 August in Prague, Czechia.

The **GB Under-18 Men's Team** and the newly-formed **GB Under-16 Men's Team** will both compete at European Championships to be held simultaneously from 3-8 July in Sezimovo Usti in Czechia. The same five countries – Czechia, Israel, Denmark, Croatia and GB – have entered both competitions, and if the schedule allows, some of the younger players might be playing in both tournaments. These Championships will be a test for the progress being made at the younger end of the GB Men's Fastpitch programme.

The **GB Cubs Under-13 Girls' Fastpitch Team** will make its annual trip to the European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy Tournament (EMRYT) in Collecchio, near Parma in Italy, from 9-12 August, where the team will play in the more competitive Sport Division. In the last EMRYT tournament before the pandemic, in 2019, the GB Cubs won a silver medal; last year, they lost in the bronze medal game.

Official European Cup competitions in 2023

Two co-ed slowpitch teams, two women's fastpitch teams and two men's fastpitch teams from Britain will compete in European Cup competitions in 2023 – providing that hosts for these tournaments can be identified. At present, none of the four Cup tournaments that British teams have entered have hosts, and if no hosts are found, the tournaments will not happen. Hopefully, this can be avoided, and we may know more by the AGM.

Assuming a host is found, **H2O** and the **Travelling Dodgers**, winners of the 2022 and 2021 NSL1 Nationals respectively, will represent Great Britain at the European Co-ed Slowpitch Super Cup. Seventeen teams from eight countries have entered the competition, its largest-ever entry.

Going forward, British representatives in the European Co-ed Slowpitch Super Cup will be determined by winning the NSL1 League rather than the NSL1 Nationals.

Again assuming that hosts are found. the 2022 Great Britain Fastpitch League (GBFL) Women's Division winner **The Mix** will compete in the European Women's Cup from 21-26 August and the GBFL Women's Division runner-up **Barbarians** will compete in the European Cup Winners Cup B on the same dates. Only four teams have entered the European Women's Cup this year, while seven teams have entered the European Cup Winners Cup B.

Finally, and again assuming that a host is found for the European Men's Fastpitch Super Cup, the 2022 GBFL Men's Division winners **The Stags** and a **GB Men's Development Team** will both compete from 28 August-2 September. The Stags are returning to the competition after their debut in 2022, and the creation of a GB Development Team to take up the second place available in the tournament should give valuable high-level game time to young players in the GB Men's programme.

GB Women's Fastpitch Aims and Opportunities

GB Women's Softball Performance Director Gary Anderson describes the World Class Performance Programme he is attempting to build around the GB Women's Team, looks back to achievements in 2022 and looks forward to opportunities that lie ahead.

Great Britain has an opportunity to elevate the Senior Women's National Team to be competing among the world's best by 2028, and following a full analysis of **What it Takes to Win**, the team is positioned to accelerate its performance trajectory.

Athlete and staff insights from feedback surveys make it clear that both groups wish to be part of the evolution of a World Class Performance Programme (WCPP) that ensures alignment of our female national fastpitch teams with an appropriate player performance pathway.

The programme must be able to respond to significant opportunities and be agile enough to minimise performance risks.

As part of our wider review activities, we are continuing to support impactful performance reviews that can unearth critical development opportunities or opportunities for competitive advantage.

2022 Senior Women performance highlights

- Winning the silver medal at the European Women's Championship.
- Beating Italy for first time ever in official competition at senior level.
- Beating The Netherlands convincingly in the final group stages.
- Moving up to second in the European Senior Women's rankings.
- Qualifying for the WBSC World Cup Group Stage.
- Doing all this with the youngest team by average age at the European Championship, which correlates well with age benchmarking for the 2028 Olympics.

System ambitions

- Establishing an integrated performance pathway that combines world-class coaching, talent identification, benchmarking, scouting, recruitment and performance support.
- Maintaining the capacity to manage and support a World Class Performance Programme that builds a case for maximum investment from our performance partners.
- Managing and delivering the World Class Performance Programme, led by an appropriate Performance Management Group that aligns to the programme's principles.
- Developing an athlete-first performance culture that will ensure sustainability beyond the 2028 Olympic Games.

Team ambitions

- To win medals at Olympic, World and European events. We aim to create a medal zone team from the new performance pathway structure by the 2028 Olympic Games.
- To have a cohort of players in the performance pathway by 2028 that can sustain medal-winning objectives beyond the Los Angeles Olympics.

What is the strategy for the transition management process?

- Doing an audit of the system's transition readiness.
- Communicating with the organisation about why change is needed.
- Collecting information from those affected by the change to understand its impact on them and gain their investment in the outcome.
- Educating coaches and other staff about how the change will affect individuals in the system so the transition can be managed effectively.
- Helping individuals understand how they can make positive contributions to change and the importance of their roles in the National Squads system.

BSF ACCOUNTS & BUDGET

BSF Accounts: year ended 30/9/22 + Budget 2023 proposed

Year-ended 30 Sept	2021			2022		2023	
	AGM Budget	Revised Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Fees	46,984	40,610	40,232	42,244	49,650	52,664	
Nationals and WS	18,200	14,883	14,883	14,883	21,674	17,056	
Insurance	2,240	2,894	2,694	2,894	3,435	3,435	
TOTAL INCOME	67,424	58,387	57,809	60,021	74,759	73,155	-
Nationals and WS	18,669	15,513	15,444	15,513	22,461	16,947	
NTL Out	3,000	2,000	-	3,000	3,000	3,000	
Insurance	6,919	5,255	5,255	7,029	7,876	8,320	
BSUK Service fee	3,000	3,000	-	2,250	2,250	972	
Development	2,250	2,250	1,000	3,500	875	5,000	
GBR teams	21,650	9,110	10,553	22,935	20,748	23,831	
Marketing / Events	6,900	3,603	5,287	10,050	9,544	10,860	
Meetings / Travel	-	102	84	4,400	3,659	3,200	
Financial costs	8,350	7,250	6,978	8,250	8,209	10,100	
TOTAL COSTS	70,738	48,083	44,601	76,927	78,621	82,229	-
RESULT FOR YEAR	- 3,314	10,304	13,208	- 16,906	- 3,863	- 9,075	-

BALANCE SHEETS	Forecast	re-Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual
	2021			2022		2023	
Assets			48,725		59,525		
Liabilities			- 5,127		- 19,789		
Net Assets			43,598		39,736		
Reserves b/f	30,390	30,390	30,390	43,598	43,598	39,736	
Profit / -Loss	- 3,314	10,304	13,208	- 16,906	- 3,863	- 9,075	
Reserves c/f	27,076	40,694	43,598	26,692	39,736	30,661	

BSF TEAM AFFILIATION FEES: 2023

The BSF did not raise team affiliation fees in 2021 as we began our recovery from the pandemic. We then brought in a small increase in 2022, amounting to well under £1 per player, because of the need to build back reserves after pandemic-induced losses.

We did not originally intend to implement another fee increase in 2023, but the massive rise in inflation over the past year, which will dramatically increase some of our costs, has led us to change our minds.

So we are proposing that BSF fees will rise again in 2023 by around 5% to help us cope with increased costs. This is half of the current rate of inflation, less than 40% of where inflation stood at its pre-Christmas peak and well under £1 per player.

The new fees are shown below, with 2022 fees in brackets.

Full-Member League Teams: £220 (£210)

Associate Member Teams: £115 (£110)

Associate members include:

- Independent tournament teams with no league affiliation.
- Scottish league teams.
- Great Britain Fastpitch League teams.
- New league teams for the first two years of their existence.
- BASU as an organisation.

Junior Members: £85 (£80)

- Under-18 teams (50% of rostered players must be under-18).
- University teams playing in BSF leagues.

Special Membership: £85 (£80)

- A one-off team membership to allow entry to one specific competition.

GB National Teams: £30 (£30)

- This fee is to provide Public Liability insurance for GB National Teams when they train or play in the UK.

Single-Sex Teams created from non-BSF members: £10 per day (£10 per day)

- This fee is to provide Public Liability insurance for single-sex slowpitch teams with members who are not affiliated to the BSF through co-ed slowpitch teams.

University Teams not in BSF Leagues: No fee

As has been the case since 2017, teams that enter the BSF Single-Sex Slowpitch National Championships or the Softball World Series will not be required to pay an additional affiliation fee for insurance purposes provided that all members of the team are rostered with co-ed slowpitch teams or fastpitch teams affiliated to the BSF. This will continue to be the case in 2023.

BSF ANNUAL AWARDS

The BSF Annual Awards, mostly based on the 2022 season, will be announced during the AGM.

Awards will be given in the following categories:

- The Glover Cup
- The League Glover Cup
- The President's Club Award
- The 2022 Umpire of the Year
- The 2022 Tournament of the Year
- The 2022 Young Fastpitch Player of the Year
- The 2022 Young Slowpitch Player of the Year
- The Betsy Holden Award

BSUK COACH & VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Softball and baseball coaching and volunteer awards for achievements in 2022 were announced by BSUK at their annual Coach Summit at the end of January 2023. The softball awards presented were:

Softball Youth Coach of the Year Award

Given to an outstanding contributor to coaching young people in softball in Great Britain in 2022.

Winner: Jodie Rushin (GB Under-13 and Under-15 programmes)

Other nominees:

Holly Ireland (RBI Wales)

David Morris (Chichester Falcons)

Jodie has worked tirelessly to make the GB Under-13 Cubs Fastpitch Softball programme grow and has created opportunities for players at the grassroots level to compete in international tournaments across Europe. Her coaching skill was particularly evident in 2022, when an inexperienced team finished fourth at both the Joudrs Cup in Prague and the European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy (EMRYT) in Collecchio, Italy.

Softball Adult Coach of the Year Award

Given to an outstanding contributor to adult softball coaching in Great Britain in 2022.

Winner: Kellie Whitaker (GB Slowpitch)

Other nominees:

Ian Tomlin (Great Britain Fastpitch League Hawks and Great Britain Softball U-18 National Team)
Jennifer Edis (Oxford Softball League and Oxford Brookes University)

Kellie made many outstanding contributions to GB Slowpitch national teams in 2022. She helped take both the Co-ed and Men's Slowpitch Teams to gold medals last summer, stepping in as a coach to cover the absence of Head Coach Steve Patterson on both occasions, in addition to fulfilling her role as Team Operations Manager.

Kellie also coached the GB Futures Team at the BSF Softball World Series in September 2022 and helped H2O end 17 years of struggle by coaching them to an NSL1 Championship. She is also the captain of Manchester Thunder in the Manchester Softball League.

Baseball Awards

Winners of baseball coaching awards were:

Baseball Youth Coach of the Year: Scott Bourgeois

Baseball Adult Coach of the Year: Drew Spencer

General Awards

General awards can be won by people from both the softball and baseball communities.

The award for **Services to Coaching**, for the individual who best personifies what it means to be a baseball or softball coach over a long period of time, was won by Michael Harrold from the Long Eaton Storm and Great Britain Baseball National Team.

Other nominees for this award were John Eaton from UK Blind Baseball, Kellie Whitaker from Great Britain Slowpitch Softball and Kim Comer from the London Softball League.

The **Young Coach of the Year Award**, given to an outstanding young coach under the age of 25 who has made a special contribution to baseball or softball coaching in Great Britain in 2022, was won by Matthew Moran from Great Britain Under-18 Baseball and London Legends.

Other nominees were Jessica Vernon from the Great Britain Baseball Under-12 National Team and Belles Baseball, and Amie Hutchison from the Under-14 Great Britain Fastpitch League.

Volunteer of the Year. This award, for a volunteer in a non-coaching role who has given up a substantial amount of time to support their local club, team or league and who has made a significant impact on the development of our sports, was won by Abi Battisto from the Leicester Diamonds.

Other nominees were Aspi Dimitrov from Herts Baseball Club, and Alan Le Marquand from the Maidenhead Softball Club, Windsor & Maidenhead Softball League, BSUK Academy and Great Britain Softball.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award. This new award, presented for the first time at the 2023 British Baseball and Softball Coaching Awards, recognised a contribution made by a coach towards tackling inequality and removing barriers to participants from underrepresented groups: women and girls, people with disabilities, people with low socio-economic status, people from ethnic minority groups and members of the LGBTQ+ community. The award was won by John Eaton from UK Blind Baseball.

Other nominees were Jay Smith from Leicester Diamonds and Kat Macann from Raiders Softball.

ELECTION OF BSF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

All current members of the BSF Executive listed below are at the halfway point of a two-year term and are standing unopposed because no nominations were received for these positions. Because no nominations for any of the vacant positions on the Executive apart from one General Officer position were received from the community before the deadline, nominations for these positions can be made during the AGM.

DIRECTORS:

Role	Standing	Serving	Nominated
President	Position vacant		
Treasurer		Laura Burkhardt	
Competitions Officer		Liz Graham	
National Teams Officer	Position vacant		

OFFICERS:

Technical Officer		Pete Saunders	
Coaching Officer		Michael Lott	
Communications and Marketing Officer	Position vacant		

GENERAL OFFICERS (up to six General Officer roles can currently be created by the Executive, though if proposed changes to the BSF Articles are passed at this AGM, the number of General Officer roles will be reduced to three in future):

General Officer/Competitions Support		Lesley Morisetti	
General Officer/Safeguarding		Stella Ackrell	
General Officer			Nicola-Jane Dyson

BSF STAFF: The **BSF Administrator** – a position currently held by Bob Fromer – is a part-time paid position and is not subject to election.

CONSTITUTIONAL MOTIONS TO THE 2023 BSF AGM

From the BSF Executive

The BSF Executive has undertaken a review of the BSF Articles of Association and would like to bring a number of changes to the AGM for discussion and approval. These are as follows (current wording **in black** and new wording **in red**):

Objects -- 3.1.2

“The Sport” means Softball in all its variants and disciplines, including but not limited to Slowpitch, Fastpitch, Indoor, Beach, Corporate, **and, in collaboration with the British Baseball Federation (“BBF”), the cross-sport disciplines of Baseball5, eSports and Para-sports (specifically Blind Baseball and Wheelchair Softball).**

The new formats mentioned are now official WBSC baseball/softball disciplines and need to be included within the remit of both national governing bodies.

Objects – New clause 3.1.6

In collaboration with the British Baseball Federation (“BBF”), to organise, promote and develop Baseball5, eSports, Para-sports (such as Blind Baseball and Wheelchair Softball) in Great Britain, including the entry of club teams and national teams into international competition. For the purposes of this Article, “eSports” means any form of active virtual/electronic entertainment representing or impersonating fully or in part any of the disciplines, events or trademarks governed by the WBSC as well as all related online and offline competitions.

This clause spells out the shared responsibility between the BSF and the BBF for administering and developing the new formats mentioned in Objects/3.1.2.

Objects – New clause 3.1.7

To collaborate with the British Baseball Federation (“BBF”) on Olympic and Paralympic matters, working with BaseballSoftballUK (“BSUK”), our representative Member of the British Olympic Association (“BOA”), to represent baseball/softball at the National Olympic Committee level and to support the inclusion of baseball/softball within the British Paralympic Association (“BPA”).

This clause refers to a Memorandum of understanding signed by the BSF, the BBF, and BSUK giving BSUK the power to represent both sports at Olympic and Paralympic organisations.

Chairing of Meetings of the Board – New Clause 13.3

If the office of President is vacant because the post has not been filled at a General Meeting or an incumbent has withdrawn from the Board between such meetings and no one has yet been co-opted for the post, ... the members of the Board shall choose one of their number to take on the responsibilities of the role until the next General Meeting or until someone is co-opted, whichever shall be sooner.

Previously, the Articles specified that in these circumstances the Board should choose one of their number to chair meetings but did not suggest that they would take on Presidential responsibilities beyond this.

Methods of Appointing Directors – Clauses 18.1 and 18.2

18.1 The number of Directors shall be subject to a **minimum of three and a maximum of five and the Directors have sole responsibility for matters relating to incorporation.**

The new wording specifies a minimum number of Directors and gives them sole responsibility for the corporate affairs of the BSF as a limited company.

18.2 The members of the Board shall be the five Directors, who shall be the Executive Officers ... **and up to six other Officers ... plus an Athlete Representative. The number of General Officers would be limited to three unless the Board votes to add additional General Officer posts.**

This changes to this clause mean that the Board would be limited to 11 elected Directors and other Officers, with a maximum of three General Officers rather than six as at present, though with some flexibility to increase this number. This is designed to keep the Board to a workable size. The new wording allows the BSF to add a non-voting Athlete Representative to the Board. The Athlete Representative will represent all three formats (slowpitch, women's fastpitch and men's fastpitch) and will chair a small Athletes Commission with representatives from each format.

Officers – Clause 19.2

All Directors and other Officers – but not the Athlete Representative – will have a vote on all non-corporate matters that come before the Board. In the event of a tied vote, the President will hold a casting vote.

Previously, the Articles said that only the Directors could vote, not all of the Officers on the Board. We feel that all elected Officers should have a vote.

Director's Remuneration – Clause 22.2 – SUGGESTED DELETION

Subject to the provisions of the Companies Acts ... the Board may provide benefits, whether by the payment of gratuities or pensions or by insurance or otherwise, for any director who has held but no longer holds any executive office or employment with the Company or with any body corporate which is or has been a subsidiary of the Company or a predecessor in business of the Company or of any such subsidiary, and for any member of his family (including a spouse and a former spouse) or any person who is or was dependent on him, and may (as well before as after he ceases to hold such office or employment) contribute to any fund and pay premiums for the purchase or provision of any such benefit.

We propose deleting this clause from the Articles as not appropriate to the way the BSF operates.

Elections – Clause 26.1

Any Voting Member may nominate individuals to be an Elected Officer. Any nomination must be made on a form **or in such manner** as prescribed from time to time by the Board. Voting Members may only nominate one candidate for each post and the form **or information required** must be completed and returned to the Administrator not later than such date as the Board shall prescribe each year. **Candidates may not self-nominate but must be proposed by a Voting Member.**

New wording for this clause is shown in red.

Elections – New Clause 26.3

In the event that there are no nominations for vacancies for Directors or other Officers at an AGM or EGM if convened for purposes of an election, nominations may be proposed during the meeting and voted on by Voting Members in attendance, save that nominations for President cannot be made in this way and can only be made as prescribed in 26.1.

While other Officers can be nominated “from the floor” at an AGM for vacant positions where there are no prior nominations, we feel that the office of President is too important to be chosen in such an ad hoc manner.

Amendments to Resolutions – Article 42 -- SUGGESTED DELETION

42.1 An ordinary resolution to be proposed at a general meeting may be amended by ordinary resolution if:

42.1.1 notice of the proposed amendment is given to the Company in writing by a person entitled to vote at the general meeting at which it is to be proposed not less than 48 hours before the meeting is to take place (or such later time as the Chair of the meeting may determine), and

42.1.2 the proposed amendment does not, in the reasonable opinion of the Chair of the meeting, materially alter the scope of the resolution.

42.2 A special resolution to be proposed at a general meeting may be amended by ordinary resolution, if:

42.2.1 the Chair of the meeting proposes the amendment at the general meeting at which the resolution is to be proposed, and

42.2.2 the amendment does not go beyond what is necessary to correct a grammatical or other non-substantive error in the resolution.

42.3 With the consent of the Chair of the meeting, an amendment may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before the resolution is voted upon.

42.4 If the Chair of the meeting, acting in good faith, wrongly decides that an amendment to a resolution is out of order, the chair's error does not invalidate the vote on that resolution.

We propose deleting this entire Article as not appropriate to the way the BSF operates.

GENERAL MOTIONS OR PROPOSALS TO THE 2023 BSF AGM

There were no general motions or proposals to the AGM this year from the BSF Executive or from members of the softball community.



BASU REPORT

Pete Saunders
BSF Technical Officer

In 2022, BASU umpires called in 48 tournaments covering nearly 3,000 games -- quite an achievement.

However, the loss of Chris Moon is probably what 2022 will be best remembered for. Chris contributed hugely to British Softball and will be greatly missed, and it was only fitting that he was inducted into the BSF Hall of Fame at last year's AGM.

Training

BASU slowpitch umpire trainers in 2022 were Chris Moon, Pete Saunders, Chris Lunn and Jason Smith, with Jana McCaskill and Bridget Cameron for fastpitch. Colin Russell, Jason Smith, Stephen Coyle, Symon Tymms, Matt Andrews, Matt Tebb and Lesley Morisetti are joining the slowpitch training team for 2023.

Umpire assessors for slowpitch were Chris Moon, Pete Saunders, Mike Jennings, Luis Arrevillagas, Jes Sandhu, Lesley Morisetti, Chris Lunn and Jason Smith, and Jana McCaskill and Bridget Cameron for fastpitch.

A total of 38 assessments were carried out in 2022 (37 in 2019). In 2022, 131 people signed up for an online course, 83 actually attended, 80 completed the video part of the course, 48 people passed the quiz at the end of the course and there were 10 new BASU umpires as a result. This compares to 36 delegates who sat two-day courses in 2019.

To date, we have slowpitch courses booked in 2023 for the Bristol, East Midlands, Solent, Windsor, London (2), Cardiff and Manchester leagues.

Anyone who just wants to get a better grasp of the rules is welcome to watch as much of the course videos as they wish at <https://edpuzzle.com/join/obeabec>.

Slowpitch Advanced Course. We haven't run a two-day Advanced Course since 2019. We hope to bring this back in for 2024, along with a field umpire course.

As usual, at the BSF Slowpitch Nationals, the cost of multiple umpires was partially subsidised by the BSF and BASU. This is done to provide a better experience for the players as well as to provide our umpires with more experience in using the two-umpire system. We continue to receive very positive feedback from these efforts.

BASU umpires in Europe

BASU was well represented in Europe in 2022.

Chris Lunn, Stephen Coyle and Pete Saunders as UiC attended the European Men's Slowpitch Championship in Colorno, Italy.

Bridget Cameron umpired at the European Under-23 Men's Fastpitch Championship in Sezimovo Usti, Czechia.

Chris Lunn, Jason Smith and Lesley Morisetti, with Pete Saunders as UiC, attended the European Co-ed Slowpitch Championship in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Darrell Pitman umpired at the European Women's Championship in Sant Boi, Spain; Jes Sandhu officiated at the European Women's Cup Winners Cup in Viladecans, Spain; and David Hurley umpired at the European Men's Super Cup in Prague.

Pete Saunders was appointed as Softball Europe's Slowpitch Training Officer.

In summary

Post-Covid, we are still learning about training new umpires in a new way, through online courses.

With the continuing growth of softball around the UK, BASU will continue to need a new influx of qualified umpires every year and we would like to encourage leagues to organise regional online courses. Some leagues are very active in this process but there are a couple of leagues that could do more.

Tournament umpires generally start as league umpires, so we need to keep the number of qualified league umpires as high as possible.

Any league Umpire-in-Chief looking to run a BASU course in 2024 should contact Colin Russell (BASUTrainingOfficer@gmail.com).

Bat certification

For use in the UK, a bat needs to have a Softball USA (ASA) stamp **or** a WBSC (ISF) stamp and not be on the Softball USA/ASA non-approved bat list.

However, any teams and players likely to be playing in European tournaments, and particularly the Slowpitch World Cup in 2023, should be aware that further restrictions might be in place at such events, with only bats certified by the WBSC likely to be allowed. So buy bats accordingly!

All the details can be found here: <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/~/link.aspx?id=015F4358A30B44368FC142350D112FFF&z=z>.

Rulebooks

Rulebooks for 2022-2025 (for fastpitch and slowpitch) were published by the WBSC in 2022 and can be found here: <https://www.wbsceurope.org/en/documents/search?keyword=rule&year=2022>.

Reminders

Alcohol, drugs, smoking and vaping in dugouts. In 2023, umpires will first warn, then eject any player who they think may be unsafe to play, and a danger to themselves or others, as a result of alcohol or drugs, which are prohibited in dugouts -- as is smoking (including vaping).

The relevant sections from the WBSC Rules, to which the BSF adheres, are:

DUGOUT 2.1.6

The area in dead ball territory designated for team members only.

There must be no smoking, consumption of alcohol or use of chewing tobacco in this area. Smoking includes the inhalation of tobacco products, e-cigarettes and vaping.

3.5.1 IN GENERAL

During a game, a person on the line-up card or otherwise permitted in the dugout must remain inside the designated dugout area, except when these Rules permit or when considered justified by an Umpire. This includes players other than the on-deck batter (who must remain in the on-deck circle) at the start of the game, between innings or when a pitcher is warming up. **There shall be no smoking, consumption of alcohol or the use of chewing tobacco in the designated area.**

Jewellery. In 2020, BASU suggested that the Jewellery Rule be amended to only disallow jewellery that is liable to cause harm to another player or create a distraction. This was agreed by the BSF and came into force. Covid hit us soon afterwards and the news didn't reach everyone, so we are republishing this as a reminder.

MAKE SURE YOUR TEAM, CLUB OR LEAGUE IS ON THE TEAM FINDER!

BaseballSoftballUK has recently installed an updated Team Finder on the BSF and BSUK websites – the easiest way to find a baseball or softball team in the UK near you!

Since the inception of what was then called the Diamond Finder in 2011, the BSF and BSUK websites have featured a team-finding application, allowing any UK-based user to find British baseball or softball near them. With the launch of the new, mobile-friendly BSF website in 2021 and the new BSUK website last April, BSUK's Operations Department determined that, while the Team Finder was a vital part of the British baseball and softball online offering, it was in dire need of an update.

In determining which platform to build the new Team Finder on, BSUK evaluated several map platforms, with a key focus on ease of use and the ability to list multiple teams at a single location – two of the most common requests from the current playing community.

The new Team Finder is built on the Super Store Finder platform, created by Joe Iz, and is designed to allow potential players to access all team information in one place. Every team is able to list their contact information, social media details, and website on their individual listing, giving potential players a direct line from the Finder to playing opportunities. The new Team Finder will automatically show all the teams within a 100-mile radius of your location, and you can search for teams by typing any UK postcode. The Team Finder listings are divided by sport type, and the new Finder has even more options for teams and users – with the addition of Disability Baseball/Softball teams and sport-specific softball categories (Fastpitch/Slowpitch/Both) to make the user experience even easier.

“The Team Finder is one of the most viewed online pages for British baseball and softball, so it was vital that we had an application that was easy to use and displayed the information in an easy-to-read manner,” said Chris Knoblock, BaseballSoftballUK Public Relations Officer. “This new Team Finder checks both boxes, giving us even more flexibility to aggregate and share Club and Team information with potential players. As we update the Finder with the latest information, it will be an incredibly useful tool across all formats of our sports for years to come!”

As part of the Team Finder launch process, BSUK's operations staff is undertaking an update process, but this will only work if teams, clubs and leagues are prepared to upload or update their information.

To update your team's listing, please click on the form [here](#).

2023 SOFTBALL CALENDAR

(as of 6 February 2023)

Slowpitch = Black

Fastpitch = Red

Baseball = Green

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	ORGANISER
Dec 31-Jan 1			
Jan 7-8	BSF Executive Face-to-Face Weekend	Manchester	Bob Fromer
Jan 14 Jan 15			
Jan 21 Jan 22	Windsor Winter Indoor Tournament	TBC	Alan Le Marquand
Jan 28-29	BSUK Coach Summit	Bisham Abbey	Colin Barrett
Feb 4 Feb 5	BASU AGM	Farnham Park	Andy Chase
Feb 9-11	WBSC Europe Congress	Belgrade	Ieuan Gale
Feb 11 Feb 12			
Feb 16	BSF League Heads Forum	Remote meeting	Bob Fromer
Feb 18 Feb 19			
Feb 25 Feb 26	2023 BSF AGM Chicks with Sticks and Let the Boys Play Indoor Tournament	Remote meeting TBC	Bob Fromer Alan Le Marquand
Mar 4-5			
Mar 11-12			
Mar 18-19 Mar 19	BUCS Softball Championship Windsor Spring Indoor Tournament	Farnham Park TBC	Liz Knight Alan Le Marquand
Mar 25-26	BUCS Baseball Championship	Farnham Park	Liz Knight

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	ORGANISER
Apr 1-2	Great Britain Fastpitch League 1	Farnham Park	David Morris
Apr 8-9	EASTER WEEKEND		
Apr 9-10	BSUK Fully Loaded Cup	Farnham Park	Liz Knight
Apr 15			
Apr 16			
Apr 22-23	Great Britain Fastpitch League 2	Farnham Park	David Morris
	Manchester First Ball	Manchester	TBC
Apr 22	2023 Cardiff First Ball	Cardiff	Matt Andrews
Apr 29-30	Jersey 30 th Anniversary Tournament	St Helier	Ali Wade
Apr 29	GB Slowpitch Trials & Training	Farnham Park	Kellie Whitaker
Apr 30	Bristol First Ball	Keynsham	Jo Newton
	Let the Girls Play Single-Sex Tournament	TBC	TBC
	GB Challenge Tournament	Farnham Park	Kellie Whitaker
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May 6-7	BSUK May Cup	Farnham Park	Liz Knight
May 13-14	Great Britain Fastpitch League 3	Farnham Park	David Morris
May 13	London Softball League First Ball	Chiswick	Lorraine Phee
May 20-21	NSL League Play 1	Farnham Park	Liz Graham
May 20	Women's All-Star Fastpitch League (after NSL play)	Farnham Park	Liz Knight
May 27-28	Liverpool Shield	Widnes	Stephen Shearer
May 27-29	Zeisterslot Tournament	Zeist, NL	Jill Russell
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Jun 3-4	BSUK June Cup	Farnham Park	Liz Knight
	Diffodil Tournament	Cardiff	Dave McCarthy
Jun 10-11	BSF Single-Sex Slowpitch National Championships	Manchester	Holly Ireland
	Great Britain Fastpitch League 4	Farnham Park	David Morris
Jun 12-14	GB Women Trials	Oklahoma City	Tara Henry
Jun 17-18	NSL League Play 2	Farnham Park	Liz Graham
Jun 17	Women's All-Star Fastpitch League (after NSL play)	Farnham Park	Liz Knight
Jun 24-25			
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Jul 1-2	Bristol Somerball	Keynsham	Jo Newton
Jul 2-9	GB Women Camp	Vero Beach, Fla	Tara Henry

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	ORGANISER
Jul 3-8	European U-16 & U-18 Men's Fastpitch Championships	Sezimovo Usti, CZ	TBC
Jul 8-9	Leeds Tournament	Leeds	TBC
Jul 11-15	WBSC Women's World Cup Qualifier Group A	Dublin	Gary Anderson
Jul 15-16	Windsor Invitational Tournament	Farnham Park	tournaments@wmsoftball.com
Jul 22-23	EMSL Labor Day Tournament	Leicester	TBC
Jul 24-29	European Men's Fastpitch Championship	Horsholm, Denmark	TBC
Jul 29-30	NSL League Play 3	Farnham Park	Liz Graham
Jul 29	Women's All-Star Fastpitch League (after NSL play)	Farnham Park	Liz Knight
July 31-Aug 5	European Under-18 Women's Championship	Prague, Cz	David Morris
Aug 5-6	Manchester Tournament Great Britain Fastpitch League 5	Manchester Farnham Park	TBC David Morris
Early Aug TBC	European Co-ed Slowpitch Super Cup	TBC	Various
Aug 9-12	Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy for U-13 Teams	Collecchio, Italy	Julie Spittle
Aug 12-13	BSF Co-ed Slowpitch League National Championships	Farnham Park	Liz Graham
Aug 14-19	European Women's Cup	TBC	TBC
Aug 19-20	Bristol Wreck Tournament	Keynsham	Jo Newton
Aug 19	London Softball League Last Ball	Chiswick	Lorraine Phee
Aug 21-26	European Men's Fastpitch Super Cup	TBC	Various
Aug 26-27	Edinburgh Festiball	Edinburgh	Liz Graham
Sep 2-3	BSF Co-ed Slowpitch NSL National Championships	Farnham Park	Liz Graham
Sep 9-10	Softball World Series	Farnham Park	Liz Knight
Sep 16-17			
Sep 23	Codebreakers Cup	Milton Keynes	MK Softball

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	ORGANISER
Sep 24			
Sep 30-Oct 1	Great Britain Fastpitch League 6	Farnham Park	David Morris
Oct 7-8			
Oct 14-15			
Oct 21-22			
Oct 28-29			
Nov 4-5			
Nov 11-12			
Nov 18-19			
Nov 25-26			
Dec 2-3			
Dec 9			
Dec 10	Not Jingle Balls 6	Rickmansworth	Alan Le Marquand
Dec 16-17			
Dec 23-24			
Dec 30-31			

Dates Pending:

- European Co-ed Slowpitch Super Cup
- European Men's Fastpitch Super Cup
- European Women's Cup
- European Cup Winners Cup B
- WBSC Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup

- Glasgow Tartan Tournament
- Chicks w/ Sticks and Let the Boys Play Outdoor Tournaments
- Sons of Pitches and Daughters of Dirt Tournaments
- Raiders Tournament