



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BRITISH SOFTBALL FEDERATION

This is the official Notification and Information Pack for the 2022 British Softball Federation Annual General Meeting, which will be held remotely as a videoconference meeting.

Venue:

The 2022 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 on the weekend before the AGM, on Sunday 20 February 2022.

AGM Date:

Saturday 26 February 2022
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 21 February to BSF Administrator Bob Fromer: bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org.

AGM JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

To join the 2022 BSF AGM, please use the following link:

meet.google.com/ymq-ygdd-sey

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 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 virtually 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 difficult to address all questions and comments during the meeting. Despite the experience we have all had of remote meetings over the past couple of 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 virtually a full season of play in 2021, normal AGM attendance requirements will apply for the 2022 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 2021 league divisional winners that wish to take up the place they have earned in the Co-ed Slowpitch League Nationals in 2022 at the appropriate grade.
- All teams that won their grade (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze) at the 2021 Co-ed Slowpitch League Nationals if they wish to be guaranteed a place in the 2022 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 2022 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 are invoking this clause by representing 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 2022: AGENDA

| Item | Description | Reference Page in AGM Pack |
|------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | Welcome | ----- |
| 2 | Apologies | ----- |
| 3 | Matters Arising from and Approval of Minutes from the 2021 AGM | Page 5 |
| 4 | 2021 BSF Officers' Reports | Page 12 |
| 5 | 2021 National Teams Report | Page 18 |
| 6 | Key points from the League Heads Forum meeting held on 20 February 2022 | ----- |
| 7 | BSF Financial Report and 2021-22 Budget | Page 24 |
| 8 | 2022 Team Affiliation Fees | Page 25 |
| 9 | BSF Annual Awards, BSF Hall of Fame Inductions and BSUK Coach Awards for 2021 | Page 26 |
| 10 | Election of BSF Officers | Page 28 |
| 11 | BSUK Session | ----- |
| 12 | Motions and Proposals to the AGM | Page 29 |
| 13 | BASU Update | Page 30 |
| 14 | Election Results | ----- |
| 15 | Meeting Close | ----- |

Other items in this AGM Pack:

| | | |
|--|------------------------|---------|
| | 2022 Softball Calendar | Page 32 |
|--|------------------------|---------|

REPORT FROM THE 2021 BSF AGM

The 2021 BSF AGM was successfully held as a large remote meeting on Saturday 27 February, with a total of 69 people attending, including members of the BSF Executive and three BaseballSoftballUK staff members.

Votes were cast by 47 of those attending on behalf of affiliated leagues and teams.

The meeting was chaired by BSF President Jenny Fromer, who was stepping down after the AGM following four years in office. During the meeting, a number of thank you messages were posted on the Chat function commending Jenny for her leadership during that time.

Matters arising

There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 2020 BSF AGM, which had been reproduced in the 2021 AGM Pack, and there were no questions from members regarding Officers' Reports and National Team Reports in the AGM Pack.

The Minutes from the 2020 AGM were approved by 46 votes with one abstention.

New BSF website

BSF Administrator Bob Fromer told the meeting that a [new and upgraded BSF website](#) had gone live the evening before the AGM.

The new website, which can be found at www.britishsoftball.org, has been put together over the past few months by BaseballSoftballUK Head of Operations Tim Stride, and is designed to be easier to use, more image-oriented and, above all, more responsive on mobile phones, tablets and other portable devices. Members were invited to look through the new site and come back to the BSF with comments [via email](#).

International affairs

There was some discussion about prospects for European competitions in 2021, and about changes to World Cup competitions announced by the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) the day before the AGM.

Although no one knows with certainty how vaccine rollouts will progress in Europe and how and when Covid regulations and restrictions will be eased, Softball Europe (SE) is taking the position at the moment that all its tournaments planned for this summer are "on" unless and until circumstances force them to be cancelled.

The Covid regulations under which each tournament will take place will depend on local conditions applying in each country at the time, and at this point, these cannot be foreseen.

Five GB National Teams and six British club teams are scheduled to take part in official competitions this summer in three different European countries: Italy, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria.

The difficulties this poses for our national and club teams was voiced at the meeting by GB Women's Team Head Coach Rachael Watkeys, who talked about how uncertainties surrounding local regulations and their effect on tournament costs was making it impossible to plan, financially or otherwise, and this could mean players withdrawing from GB squads.

Among the issues that remain largely unknown are travel restrictions, quarantine requirements, the possible need for vaccination certificates and/or negative Covid tests before travelling and restrictions on room-sharing, which would massively increase team accommodation costs.

However, the problem at this point is that neither SE officials or tournament organisers in host countries are able to speak to these questions with any certainty.

Mike Jennings, who is a General Officer on the BSF Executive but also Softball Europe's Competitions Director, told the meeting that Softball Europe will soon announce dates on which it will make a Yes/No decision on each of its tournaments – but there is, of course, no guarantee that a "Yes" decision on a given date won't be sabotaged by later events and regulations.

Ian Tomlin, Head Coach of the GB Under-23 Men's Fastpitch Team, asked Mike why the European Under-23 Men's Qualifier planned for the summer had been cancelled. Mike replied that this was because the WBSC had moved the date of the first-ever Under-23 Men's World Cup to the end of 2022, and a new date for a European Qualifier would need to be determined.

Mike also told the meeting that, although no dates have yet been set by the WBSC for the long-promised Slowpitch World Cup, the WBSC has set up a Working Group to look at all aspects of developing co-ed and single-sex slowpitch worldwide as another of the WBSC's main disciplines, alongside baseball, fastpitch softball and Baseball5.

Mike will be Europe's lead representative on the Working Group, which will hold its first meeting on 23 March 2021. One of its key aims will be to define regulations and set a date for the first-ever Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup for national teams.

Meanwhile, on 26 February, the WBSC announced a major shake-up of its systems, processes and Calendar for fastpitch World Cups through 2029. Details of these changes will be set out in an article to appear shortly on the BSF website. Meanwhile, full details can be found on the [WBSC website](#).

Report from the 2021 League Heads Forum

The 2021 League Heads Forum meeting was held as a remote meeting on Saturday 13 February, and Jenny Fromer briefly listed the main topics covered: BSF finances, return to play prospects for 2021, developments at Farnham Park, Personal Accident and Injury Insurance, coach and umpire training plans for 2021 and safeguarding issues.

A number of these issues were discussed again later in the AGM, and a full report from the League Heads Forum can be found [here](#) on the new BSF website.

Personal Accident and Injury insurance

One of the issues picked up from the League Heads Forum was Personal Accident and Injury Insurance, which the BSF had wound up paying for in 2020 even though there was no season and no teams and leagues signed up for it.

That insurance ran out in December 2020, and Mike Jennings told the AGM that the BSF would not be renewing it until a minimum of 50 teams had committed to paying for it. If at least that number of teams sign up, then the cost of the insurance can be held to around £20 per team or around £1 per player. This would provide the same level of coverage as in 2019, when more than 200 teams had taken up the insurance through their leagues.

Accounts and Budget

BSF Treasurer Laura Burkhardt told the AGM that the BSF had suffered from having no membership fee income in 2020 but a considerable number of fixed costs, and the Federation had only been saved from going in or near the red by a £20,000 grant from Sport England.

This kept losses for the year to around £25,000 and allowed the BSF to finish the year with just over £30,000 in the bank, though this is less than the £55,000-£60,000 of reserves required by governance principles.

In constructing a budget for 2020-21, Laura reported, the BSF had examined its fixed costs, costs of maintaining national team programmes and National Championships (game costs) and then other discretionary costs, and had made cuts in all three categories, with help on some fixed costs from BaseballSoftballUK. A further assumption in drawing up the budget and estimating income was that not all teams that affiliated in 2019 would return in 2021: the working assumption is for a decline in team membership of 20%.

The budget set out in the AGM Pack projects an operating deficit of £3,000, but the budget could be re-examined, Laura said, once it was clearer how much of a season could be staged and what membership income was likely to be.

The BSF Executive has decided that membership fees will remain the same as in 2019 (the fees can be viewed [here](#)), though the BSF will need to raise fees over coming seasons to restore the required level of reserves.

A question was raised from the floor about the possibility of another Sport England grant this year. Nothing has yet been said by Sport England about further support for Federations, and support would be unlikely unless the season had to be cancelled. But if a grant is available, the BSF will certainly apply for it.

The 2019-20 accounts and the 2020-21 budget were approved by 45 votes with two abstentions.

Awards

Jenny Fromer told the meeting that none of the BSF's Annual Awards were being made at this year's AGM because there had been no season in 2020 to base them on.

The BSF will hope to resume its Annual Awards next year, and in addition will plan to induct new members into the BSF Hall of Fame at the 2022 AGM.

However, awards for coaching and volunteers **were** made by BaseballSoftballUK at its annual Coach Summit, held remotely at the end of January, and two awards were made to members of the softball community.

The **Softball Youth Coach of the Year Award**, given to an outstanding contributor to coaching young people in softball in Great Britain in 2020, went to Kim Roberts from the Horsham Broncos Softball Club.

The **Softball Adult Coach of the Year Award**, given to an outstanding contributor to adult softball coaching in Great Britain in 2020, went to Whitney Hollis from the London Softball League.

Full details on these awards can be found on the [BSF website](#).

Finally, the BSF Executive has made three nominations – for two players and one umpire – to the Softball Europe Hall of Fame.

The players nominated are long-time GB Slowpitch Team stars Brett Gibbens and Stephanie Jardine, and if their nominations are approved by Softball Europe, they will become the first slowpitch players inducted to the European Hall of Fame.

The umpire nomination is for Chris Moon, who has been an umpire, umpire-trainer and Training Officer in the UK as well as the BSF's Technical Officer, and who has umpired at European and ISF slowpitch tournaments as well as serving as a Softball Europe Umpire-in-Chief.

Elections for the BSF Executive

All those standing at the AGM for Officer positions on the BSF Executive were unopposed and all were elected, in most cases for two-year terms. The exception is Coaching Officer Mike Lott, who will be serving the second year of his first term in that position.

Two newcomers to the Executive are President Ieuan Gale and Communications and Marketing Officer Simon Mortimer. Technical Officer Pete Saunders is also relatively new to the Executive, having been co-opted earlier this year to replace Chris Moon, who stepped down due to illness.

The BSF Executive for 2021-22 is as follows:

DIRECTORS

President: Ieuan Gale

Treasurer: Laura Burkhardt

Competitions Officer: Liz Graham

National Teams Officer: Alexis Markham-Hill

OTHER OFFICER ROLES

Coaching Officer: Mike Lott

Technical Officer: Pete Saunders

Safeguarding Officer: **Currently vacant**

GENERAL OFFICERS

General Officer / Farnham Park Liaison: Steve Getraer

General Officer / Finance: Mike Jennings
General Officer / National Championship Support: Lesley Morisetti
General Officer / National Teams Support: Stella Ackrell
General Officer / Communications & Marketing: Simon Mortimer

APPOINTED OFFICERS

London Liaison Officer: Alan MacFarlane

BSF STAFF

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 – is a full-time paid role shared between the BSF and BaseballSoftballUK and appointed by a joint panel made up of members from both organisations.

New BSF President Ieuan Gale told the meeting that he has been a member of the softball community for a decade, playing both fastpitch and slowpitch in this country and for GB Teams abroad.

“I am humbled to be a candidate for this position,” Ieuan said, “and with a great Committee to support me, I hope to bring both energy and enthusiasm to the role, so I can play a small part in helping British softball achieve all that it can.”

Jenny Fromer told the meeting that since submitting his application to stand as President, Ieuan had spent the past several months conscientiously preparing for the position, attending BSF, BSUK and GB Management Committee meetings and talking individually with many Executive members to get a better sense of their roles and the issues facing the Federation.

BSUK session

A brief session presented by BaseballSoftballUK CEO John Boyd, Head of Commercial Joelle Watkins and National Development Manager Chris Rawlings covered the following topics:

- BSUK’s Development Charter
- Safeguarding
- Return to Play possibilities
- Farnham Park update

DEVELOPMENT CHARTER. Chris Rawlings told the meeting that BSUK’s [Development Charter](#), launched in August 2020, provides a robust programme of support for softball teams, clubs and leagues, and that all affiliated BSF teams are members by right.

However, John Boyd urged members to actively sign up to the Charter, as a public statement that development and safeguarding matter – and as a means of providing a kind of kitemark for that club or team.

SAFEGUARDING. John told the meeting that safeguarding is a statutory responsibility for any governing body of sport funded by Sport England and/or UK Sport, and that BSUK has taken on this responsibility for softball for the past 20 years, working to requirements set by the NSPCC and its Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU).

A network of Safeguarding Officers is now in place, John said, connecting policies and practices to execution on the ground. BSUK can provide various forms of safeguarding training and can help teams and

leagues with DBS checks. The system is there to make sure that any safeguarding issues are spotted early and reacted to appropriately.

He urged all league and team representatives at the meeting to ensure they had a Safeguarding Officer in place when play resumes, and that the name and contact details of this Safeguarding Officer are known to BSUK as well as to all members of the league or team.

RETURN TO PLAY. With regard to whether and when softball play can resume in 2021, Joelle Watkins told the meeting that following the government's "road map" announcement on 22 February, BaseballSoftballUK is in active discussions with Sport England, who in turn are talking to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

There is no certainty yet, Joelle said, but BSUK's belief is that when outdoor play is allowed to resume, perhaps as early as 29 March, numbers will be unrestricted – which would allow tournaments as well as league games to take place.

But this can only happen if regulations are strictly observed regarding travel, social distancing, hygiene and participant registration, as set out on the [Return to Play Hub](#) on the BSUK website. All leagues, teams or tournament organisers setting up any kind of play will need to have a Covid-19 Officer in place to ensure that regulations are known and adhered to – and BSUK will need to have the names and contact details of these Officers.

Joelle said: "With a lot of help from Steve Hazard, who works in the NHS, we successfully made the case last year that softball is a low-contact and low-risk sport, and we are sure we can do this again."

FARNHAM PARK. Joelle and John Boyd told the meeting that there are likely to be changes at Farnham Park this season that will provide improved playing conditions in future but could mean some disruption this season.

BSUK is looking to turn both the softball and baseball diamonds on Field 1, the field by the Home Plate clubhouse, into sophisticated artificial turf fields, which will provide the opportunity for year-round play on a predictable surface. But if these plans go forward, Field 1 would be out of action for part of this season. There are also plans to build a fifth dedicated softball diamond on part of the grass area between Fields 3 and 4 and what is now the Phoenix clubhouse.

In addition, South Bucks District Council, which owns and operates Farnham Park, is planning to upgrade the grass football pitches to the left of the road as you enter the Park, which are used for larger softball tournaments during the summer. From 2022 onwards, this will mean more fields available, in better condition, with the possibility of softball bookings earlier and later than is now the case.

But the result of all this upgrading is that for the 2021 season only nine or 10 pitches will be available for play, which will mean changes for some tournaments, particularly the Diamond Series and the National Softball League (NSL). The BSF is looking at these problems and talking to Diamonds organisers and expects to make an announcement soon.

In answer to a question from the floor, John Boyd confirmed that since the [British Baseball Federation](#) is no longer part of the tri-partite agreement between the BSF, the BBF and BSUK, the BSF will have priority in booking pitches and events at Farnham Park, though the hope and expectation is that baseball will still be played there.

Meanwhile, Joelle told the meeting about two new playing opportunities this season: a new [BSUK Slowpitch Cup](#), to be played at Farnham Park with "fully loaded" rules on the weekend of 19-20 June, and

the softball competition for corporate teams to be held within the UK Corporate Games at Lancaster University from 2-5 September.

Jenny Fromer told the meeting: “We are all planning for a season in 2021 – and it’s better to plan and cancel if necessary than not to plan at all. Updates will be on the new BSF website as soon as we know them.”

Closing

With the announcement of election results, Jenny Fromer brought the 2021 BSF AGM to a close.

“In all my dealings with the membership over the past four years,” Jenny said, “people have been kind and supportive, and I am grateful to the softball community.”

Although Jenny has stepped down as BSF President, she will remain for the time being as a Nominated Director on the BSUK Board to provide support for Ieuan Gale and to help with restructuring issues that BSUK and the BSF will face following the defection of the BBF.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ieuan Gale

Well, what a year! Considering where we were this time last year, in the throes of the latest lockdown, with many of us having not played since 2019, I am so happy to be able to say that, all things considered, the 2021 season was a roaring success!

Of course, it wasn't a perfect season: we still missed out on some big events, most notably through the lack of international softball. Almost all our eligible club teams and every national team ultimately had to take the difficult decision not to travel in 2021. Though this was certainly a tough decision to make, it was undoubtedly the right one and the Federation was completely supportive of the decisions made by the teams. The travel restrictions for entering Europe at the time, combined with the additional costs and the obvious health risks, made it simply impractical for our teams to play overseas last year. It was disappointing, but I have every confidence that as the world returns to normal, international softball will return to our calendars for both club and national teams in 2022.

And despite the lack of international competition in 2021, our national teams were still able to make great progress for the future.

Our slowpitch teams were able to get together and have some outstanding domestic competition, culminating in a great performance by the GB Futures team at the BSF Softball World Series. Their third place bodes well for the future of the GB Slowpitch programme. And that future is looking increasingly interesting from an international point of view, with the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) agreeing to schedule a Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup for national teams. This is something that the BSF has lobbied for over a number of years and we are very excited and pleased that this will finally happen, almost certainly in 2023.

Our fastpitch national teams also made some great progress last year. The Senior Men's programme appointed a new Head Coach, Colin Barrett, who has already had a marked impact on the programme and has great plans for the 2022 season in preparation for the Men's Europeans and World Cup Qualifier in 2023. The Under-18 Men's programme continues to go from strength to strength, increasing its growing pool of talented athletes as it has done for a few years now under the leadership of Head Coach Ian Tomlin. His work has become evident in the success of the relatively new GB Under-23 Men's Team, which had a very successful season this year. The Under-23s finished in second place in the 2021 Great Britain Fastpitch League (GBFL), an excellent jumping-off point for the 2022 season when they will be competing in the inaugural European Under-23 Men's European Championship, which will also be a qualifier for the first WBSC Under-23 Men's World Cup, to be held this October in Argentina.

The Women's Fastpitch programme also made progress last year despite a lack of international competition. Most notable was the news that funding from UK Sport that has been granted for the Senior Women's Team to aid its Olympic ambitions. This is an incredible opportunity for the Women's Team and it has led to the hiring of a highly recommended Head of Performance Systems to work with the GB Senior Women's Fastpitch Team and the GB Senior Men's Baseball Team. The GB Women have made a start on the road to the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028 with their first training camp of the year in Florida in January, which was a great success and will provide impetus towards the 2022 competition season and beyond.

Looking towards the 2022 season at home, there are exciting developments here as well. The National Softball League (NSL) has added a third tier of competition and will be played on its own weekends rather than alongside the Diamond Series. BaseballSoftballUK will run the NSL weekends on behalf of the BSF,

and any profits made will go into maintenance and improvements at Farnham Park. In 2023, if more grass fields are available at Farnham Park, the hope is to add a fourth tier of NSL competition to what is arguably the best slowpitch league in Europe.

For our domestic fastpitch players, the Great Britain Fastpitch League is being expanded to full weekends, similar to many of our slowpitch tournaments, which will dramatically increase the amount of domestic fastpitch game time available. We believe this will help to increase fastpitch engagement and competition. There are also hopes that the GBFL will feature its first junior competition in 2022, which will help to grow the youth fastpitch community and begin to bridge the gap between youth and adult competition.

With these domestic developments, and a return of international competition for both our club and national fastpitch teams, 2022 is shaping up to be one of the best years yet for fastpitch softball in the UK.

So the future looks bright for British softball, and I know we are all looking forward to that. But I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your continued support in these recent difficult times. It would have been easy for us to lose a second season to the pandemic, but due to the passion and support of our great community, I am thankful to be able to report on a positive season in 2021, and I personally cannot wait for the coming season to begin.

COMPETITIONS OFFICER'S REPORT

Liz Graham

With the resumption of softball activity in 2021 and nearly a full season of play, BSF Co-ed Slowpitch League and NSL National Championships were able to be held.

2021 National Championship Results

Co-Ed Slowpitch League Nationals

A total of 20 teams took part from all around the UK, most of whom had qualified by virtue of league placings in 2019, and the tournament eventually divided into Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze divisions when it came to the fight for trophies.

Platinum

Winner: Jets (Bristol)

Runner-up: Pyros (East Midlands)

Gold

Winner: Itchen Knicks (Solent)

Runner-up: Panthers (Bristol)

Silver

Winner: Titans (Windsor)

Runner-up: Notts Brewers (East Midlands)

Bronze

Winner: Southport Seagulls (Liverpool)

Runner-up: Hornets (Milton Keynes)

The winners at each level will be invited to the 2022 BSF Co-ed Slowpitch League Nationals at Farnham Park on 6-7 August as defending champions.

Co-ed Slowpitch NSL Nationals

After a two-year Covid break, the BSF's Co-ed Slowpitch NSL National Championships returned to Farnham Park on the weekend of 4-5 September.

NSL1 Nationals

Winner: Travelling Dodgers

Runner-up: Kks

Winning their first National Championship will qualify the Travelling Dodgers to represent Great Britain in the next edition of the European Co-ed Slowpitch Super Cup, scheduled for 2023.

NSL2 Nationals

Winner: Tempest

Runner-up: Spittin' Camels

NSL League Overview

A truncated National Softball League season – with play taking place for NSL1 and NSL2 teams on two weekends rather than three due to Covid halting play prior to June – was able to take place in 2021.

We also tested various game-time slots and ball counts to see the effect on the number of innings played.

Results of NSL league play were:

NSL1 League

Winner: Pioneers

Runner-up: Chromies

NSL2 League

Winner: LN2

Runner-up: Spittin' Camels

In 2022, for the first time, we will move to two-up, two-down promotion and relegation between NSL leagues. We are also expanding the NSL to bring in an eight-team NSL3, with a fourth level planned for 2023 (depending on field availability).

NSL leagues will now play on their own weekends, facilitated by BSUK staff, and any profits made will be invested in upkeep and improvements at Farnham Park.

2022 National Championships

Planned dates for 2022 National Championships – including the return of the Single-Sex Slowpitch Nationals – are below.

BSF Single-Sex Slowpitch Nationals

Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze

25-26 June at Somerdale Pavilion, Keynsham, Bristol

NSL3 Nationals

9-10 July at Farnham Park

Co-Ed Slowpitch League Nationals

Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze

6-7 August at Farnham Park

NSL1 and NSL2 Nationals

3-4 September at Farnham Park

Eligibility for 2022 League National Championships

The following league divisional winners in 2021 are eligible to enter the 2022 BSF League National Championships, to be played on 6-7 August at Farnham Park:

| LEAGUE WINNERS | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | D5 |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|----|
| | | | | | |
| Bristol | Archway Thunder | Victorious Secrets | Archway Lightning | | |
| East Midlands | Pyros | Leicester Royals | | | |
| Edinburgh | Souls | Haar Hitters | | | |
| Glasgow | Saltires | Chargers | | | |
| London | Red A Mescalitos | Red B MI6 & Meteors | White A Softboiled | White B Oddsox | |
| London | Gold A Basejumpers, Raiders Red & Buccaneers | Gold B The Mafia | Blue Meteors Mash & Battitude | | |
| LASL League | Flamestorm | Amazeballs | | | |
| Leeds | Masterbatters | Hippos | | | |
| Liverpool | Sefton Sharks | | | | |
| Manchester | Thunder | Sharks (MSL) | Banditos | Seagulls | |
| Milton Keynes | Roundabout Rhinos | | | | |
| Oxford | Spirits | | | | |
| Publishers | Piranhas | | | | |
| Solent | Knicks | Redbridge Raiders | | | |
| Windsor | Blue Sox | Rattlesnakes | | | |
| | | | | | |
| 2021 WINNERS: | | | | | |
| Platinum | Bristol Jets | | | | |
| Gold | Itchen Knicks | | | | |
| Silver | Titans | | | | |
| Bronze | Seagulls (LSL) | | | | |

COACHING OFFICER'S REPORT

Michael Lott

Coaching Resources

A BSF Coaches' Handbook was developed in 2021 which features skills and drills for coaches and players to use in designing effective coaching/practice sessions for themselves and their teams.

A new Facebook group has been set up for players and coaches to share and discuss softball coaching resources: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bsfcoaches/>.

In 2022 this group will also be used to identify the coaching needs of the slowpitch softball community in order to tailor the resources available.

As well as the Coaches' Handbook, a variety of coaching videos will be shared on the BSUK website that can be used by coaches to plan their sessions.

Academy Softball

Academy Softball, designed to help all players of all ages aged 10 to 25 turn the off-season into an opportunity to become better, stronger and fitter athletes, will return in 2022.

This year's Academy Softball programme will feature both regional and national training sessions, with new elements and lessons added to the programme. The most notable of these additions is that all National Academy sessions at Coventry will feature full scrimmages to put the skills learned in other sessions to the test. All other sessions will follow the usual Academy layout of skill-work and games.

For more information about venues, session layouts and prices please email academy@bsuk.com or click on this link: <https://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/news/view/academy-softball-returns-register-now>.

Coach Education

Plans are in development for a register of coaches and to ensure there is sufficient availability of suitably qualified coach-educators.

NATIONAL TEAMS REPORT

Simon Mortimer, Bob Fromer and John Boyd

Following a very challenging year in 2020 when no international competitions were held, there was hope of a return to some sort of normality in 2021.

WBSC Europe was optimistic and initially scheduled events in the hope that a “normal” season would be possible. A full calendar of European competitions was planned, with some Championships postponed from 2020 joining those already scheduled for 2021.

Unfortunately, the year started with continued uncertainty as new variants of the Covid-19 virus appeared, maintaining disruption.

GB National Teams in 2021

With our three senior National Teams – GB Co-ed Slowpitch, GB Men’s Fastpitch, and GB Women’s Fastpitch --scheduled to play early in the season at European Championships in June 2021, it was crucial that they kept on top of whether these tournaments would actually go ahead and whether travel and quarantine regulations would allow GB players to attend them.

Senior staff for the three teams formed a working group and met regularly to discuss the current state of play and the challenges posed by their respective European tournaments, sharing knowledge and reviewing both government and other guidance as it was made available.

After careful consideration, all three teams decided to withdraw from their respective European Championship tournaments during the spring on grounds of health and safety (the principal reason) as well as increased costs. The decision was further influenced by the travel and government restrictions in place in the UK, Italy and the Czech Republic at the time. It was a very difficult decision, but it had to be made in a timely fashion to avoid financial impact on the Federation, the teams and on individual players.

The European Co-ed Slowpitch Championship, scheduled to be held at the beginning of June, was subsequently cancelled by Softball Europe, but the European Men’s Fastpitch and Women’s Fastpitch Championships were played as scheduled without GB teams in attendance.

The BSF was advised by Softball Europe that should a national team have to withdraw after the deadline for Covid-related reasons, neither the team nor the Federation would be negatively impacted **financially** by their withdrawal. This was upheld, but unfortunately there were other negative impacts from withdrawal that Softball Europe had been less clear about.

The main issue was that as results from these tournaments went towards overall rankings points, both the Men’s and Women’s Fastpitch teams dropped in the European rankings. For the GB Women, this had two significant implications:

- Due to non-attendance at the 2021 European Women’s Championship the team has been seeded 16th at the 2022 European Championship, meaning it will have to go through a preliminary phase to get to the final stages of the tournament.

- The team would also not be able to qualify for the 2022 Super Six tournament – a decision which was only announced at the recent Softball Europe Extraordinary Congress in October 2021 – and which will deny the team an important additional high-level competition opportunity in Europe.

Since the GB Women's Team finished third in the 2017 and 2019 European Championships, third in the initial Super Six tournament in 2018, second in the Europe/Africa Olympic Qualifier in 2019 and has not finished lower than fifth at a European Championship since 2001, the effect of withdrawing from the 2021 tournament for valid Covid-related reasons seems disproportionate.

In the end, the only British team that attended a Softball Europe competition in 2021 was The Mix, a women's fastpitch club team from the Great Britain Fastpitch League. The Mix played in the European Women's Cup in Dupnitsa, Bulgaria in August and finished fifth.

Official competitions in 2022

A full season of European Championship and Cup tournaments is anticipated in 2022, and the hope is that all British national teams that are scheduled to compete will be able to do so.

The **GB Men's Slowpitch Team** will compete in the 2nd European Men's Slowpitch Championship in Colorno, Italy from 14-18 June, and will look to defend the title it won when the competition was first staged in 2018.

The **GB Under-22 Women's Fastpitch Team** will compete in the 7th European Under-22 Women's Fastpitch Championship, scheduled for 27 June-2 July in Kunovice, Czech Republic. Because of the pandemic, this will be the first time this event has been staged since 2018, when the GB Team lost to Ireland in the bronze medal game and finished fourth.

The **GB Under-23 Men's Fastpitch Team** will compete in the first-ever European Under-23 Men's Fastpitch Championship, to be held from 5-9 July in Sezimovo Usti, Czech Republic. This will be the first official international tournament for the GB Under-23 Men's Team, which was formed in 2019 but whose opportunities to compete since then have been frustrated by the pandemic. The tournament will be a Qualifier for the first-ever WBSC Under-23 Men's World Cup, to be held in October 2022 in Argentina, with the top two teams from the European Championship qualifying for the World Cup.

The **GB Co-ed Slowpitch Team** will compete in the 14th European Co-ed Slowpitch Championship in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 11-16 July. The team will be looking to keep the title it won when the competition was last staged in Budapest, Hungary in 2019 – but more importantly, this tournament will be a Qualifier for the first-ever WBSC Slowpitch World Cup for national teams, which is provisionally scheduled for 2023. The top teams from the European Championship will qualify for the World Cup, though the number of teams that will qualify remains to be determined.

The **GB Under-15 Women's Fastpitch Team** will compete in the 11th European Under-15 (formerly Under-16) Women's Fastpitch Championship, to be held in Enschede in The Netherlands from 18-23 July. This will be the first international tournament for the GB Under-15 Women since 2017, since the team (then at Under-16 age level) was forced to withdraw from the 2019 European Under-16 Women's Championship. This year's tournament will be a Qualifier for the next WBSC Under-15 Women's World Cup.

The **GB Senior Women's Fastpitch Team** will compete in the 23rd European Women's Fastpitch Championship, to be held from 24-30 July in Sant Boi, Spain. The three medal-winning teams at this tournament will qualify for the Group Stage of the next WBSC Women's World Cup, which will be be

played in 2023. This will be the first competitive tournament for the GB Women's Team since they lost to Italy in the final of the Europe-Africa Olympic Qualifying Tournament in 2019.

The **GB Cubs (GB Under-13 Girls' Fastpitch Team)** will compete in the 9th European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy tournament, to be held from 10-13 August in Collecchio, Italy. The last time this tournament was held, in 2019, the GB Cubs finished second in the more competitive Sport Division at the tournament.

Three GB Teams do not have a European Championship competition scheduled in 2022.

The **GB Senior Men's Fastpitch Team** will compete in a series of games against the Swedish National Team at Farnham Park on the weekend of 28-29 May and may try to attend an invitational tournament in Europe later in the season.

The **GB Under-18 Women's Fastpitch Team** will hopefully compete in the Futures Tournament at the Canada Cup in Surrey, BC, Canada from 17-26 June.

The **GB Under-18 Men's Team** staff is hoping to identify an opportunity to take the team to a European invitational tournament this summer to give the players additional playing opportunities and experience.

Great Britain will also have club teams playing in European Cup competitions in 2022.

The Mix, the British fastpitch club team that won the silver medal at the European Women's Cup in 2019 and finished fifth in 2021, will play in the 28th edition of this tournament from 15-20 August 2022 in Avigliana, Italy, near Turin. The Mix won the Great Britain Fastpitch League Women's Division in 2021.

The **Stags**, winners of the Great Britain Fastpitch League Men's Division in 2021, will enter the 10th European Men's Super Cup from 22-27 August in Prague, Czech Republic.

GB Senior Women's Team report (by John Boyd, BSUK CEO)

In March 2021, it was announced that the GB Senior Women's Fastpitch Softball Team had successfully secured National Squads Support Funding totalling £288,750 from UK Sport for the Paris 2024 Olympic cycle. This is the largest direct funding amount received by GB Softball in the past 15 years.

The grant triggers a seven-year journey to seek qualification for the Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028 (if softball is indeed included as a sport in the Games) and the intent is to win a medal there – a bold ambition and one that has been made all the more possible through partnership with and funding by UK Sport.

Work to achieve these ambitions will be coordinated through an elite performance strategy designed to allow the GB Women to reach and maintain the top spot in Europe, supporting a cohort of elite athletes within the Senior Women's squad and developing a domestic and international talent identification and development pathway.

Following the announcement of the UK Sport grant, the British Softball Federation assigned management of the programme and the development of a performance system in women's fastpitch to BaseballSoftballUK to manage and oversee. The first step has been the recruitment and appointment of a performance director, called the Head of Performance Systems. In January 2022, Gary Anderson took up the part-time post following a successful career in elite performance sport. Gary has a pedigree in winning

Olympic medals and in high performance sport and has come prepared to have an immediate impact on the programme.

The GB Women began 2022 with a training camp in Florida in late January and the intention is to return to the US for another camp ahead of the European Women's Championship in July 2022.

Meanwhile, BaseballSoftballUK has been creating a performance directorate, headed by Gary Anderson, that includes GB Women's Team Head Coach Rachael Watkeys and key GB Women's Team personnel. BSUK is also setting up a pathway directorate to establish new participation and talent development programmes in the UK for women's and girls' fastpitch. Through this work, BSUK will oversee the governance, financial management, staffing, marketing, promotion and development of Olympic softball for the British Softball Federation, through with input from the BSF through a Performance Management Group.

Revisions to WBSC World Cup formats

Using the opportunity provided by the break in international softball during the 2020 and 2021 seasons, the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) has undertaken a major overhaul of its Softball World Cup competitions and calendar.

All World Cups played by national teams (previously called World Championships) have moved to a four-year cycle.

In **fastpitch softball**, World Cups are currently held for Senior Women's and Men's Teams, Under-18 and Under-15 Women's Teams, Under-23 and Under-18 Men's Teams and Under-12 Mixed Teams.

In **slowpitch softball**, while there is no Slowpitch World Cup on the WBSC's 2021-2029 Softball Calendar (see below), this is expected to happen soon. The WBSC has set up a Working Group to look at the development of co-ed and single-sex slowpitch around the world, and one of the group's tasks will be to set a date for the first Slowpitch World Cup, expected to be in 2023 for co-ed slowpitch national teams.

Similar changes have been made to World Cup formats and schedules for the WBSC's two other major disciplines – Baseball and Baseball5 – and full details of these changes can be found on the WBSC website.

While all WBSC Softball World Cups will now operate on a four-year cycle, there will be two different versions of the cycle.

Two-Stage format

For Senior Women, Senior Men and Under-18 Women, the cycle will play out over two preliminary stages and three years:

- **Year 1 – Continental Qualifiers.** Regional championships will be played in each of the WBSC's five world regions: in Europe, this will be the European Championship. The top three teams from the European Championship will qualify for the "World Cup Group Stage".
- **Year 2 – World Cup Group Stage.** The three European teams will join two from Africa, three from Asia, five from the Americas, two from Oceania and three Wild Card teams, which could be the countries hosting the World Cup Group Stage tournaments if not already qualified or other countries that request and are granted a place. The teams – 18 in total -- will be split into three six-

team round-robin tournaments played in different locations. The top two teams from each of these groups will qualify for the World Cup Final.

- **Year 3 – World Cup Final.** The top two teams from each of the three World Cup Group Stage tournaments will join two Wild Card teams, one of which could be the host country if not already qualified, to play an eight-team World Cup Final. Otherwise, Wild Card teams will be the best third-place finishers from the World Cup Group Stage tournaments.
- **Year 4 – no event.** This is a bye year.

For Senior Men and Women, their first two cycles will be back-to-back, with no off-year in between, to ensure that from 2028 onwards, Year 4 for the Senior Women's format will be the year when the Olympic Games is staged.

The **three key differences** from previous World Championships or World Cups are:

1. The World Cup Final will only have eight participating teams, whereas this event previously had at least 12 or 16 teams.
2. World Championships used to be played every two years, so the interval between World Cup Finals has been doubled, emulating many other international sports' World Cups.
3. Previously, each WBSA continent or region was guaranteed to have some representation in the World Championship or World Cup Final. Now, regional representation is only guaranteed in the World Cup Group Stage, not in the World Cup Final itself.

Single-Stage format

For all other age groups -- Under-15 Women's Teams, Under-23 and Under-18 Men's Teams and Under-12 Mixed Teams -- the cycle will play out over two years, with one preliminary stage:

- **Year 1** – Continental Qualifiers (for GB teams, this will be the European Championship).
- **Year 2** – World Cup Final.
- **Year 3** – no event.
- **Year 4** – no event.

In this format, 12 teams will take part in the World Cup Final, and continental or regional representation is guaranteed.

World Cup Finals will be contested by one team from Africa; two each from Europe, Asia and Oceania; four teams from the Americas; and one Wild Card Team, which could be the host country.

The **two key differences** from previous World Championships or World Cups for these age groups are:

1. Some of these tournaments used to have 16 teams participating, so opportunities for countries to get to a World Cup Final have been reduced.
2. For some of these age groups, World Cups used to be played every two years, so the interval between World Cup Finals has been doubled, reducing participation chances for athletes. A four-year interval for age-group teams means that players essentially have only one shot at participation at each age level.

Calendar

The WBSC Softball Calendar for 2021-29 is shown below:



| WBSC WORLD CUPS | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| WOMEN'S SOFTBALL WORLD CUP | | XVII | | | XVIII | | | | XIX |
| | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | GROUP STAGE | FINALS | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | GROUP STAGE | FINALS | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS |
| U18 WOMEN'S SOFTBALL WORLD CUP | XIV U-18 LIMA, PER | | XV U-18 | | | | XVI U-18 | | |
| | | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | GROUP STAGE | FINALS | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | GROUP STAGE | FINALS |
| U15 WOMEN'S SOFTBALL WORLD CUP | | I U-15 | | | | II U-15 | | | |
| | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | FINALS | | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | FINALS | | |
| MEN'S SOFTBALL WORLD CUP | | XVII | | XVIII | | | | XIX | |
| | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | AUCKLAND, NZL | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | GROUP STAGE | FINALS | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | GROUP STAGE |
| U23 MEN'S SOFTBALL WORLD CUP | I U-23 | | | | II U-23 | | | | III U-23 |
| | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | FINALS | | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | FINALS | | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS |
| U18 MEN'S SOFTBALL WORLD CUP | | XIV U-18 | | | | XV U-18 | | | |
| | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | FINALS | | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | FINALS | | |
| U12 MIXED WORLD CUP | | II U-12 | | III U-12 | | | | IV U-12 | |
| | | TAIPEI, TPE | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | FINALS | | | CONTINENTAL QUALIFIERS | FINALS |

www.wbsc.org

BSF ACCOUNTS & BUDGET

BSF Accounts: year ended 30/9/21 + proposed 2022 Budget

BSF Accounts: year ended 30/9/21 + Budget 2022 proposed

| Year-ended 30 Sept | 2020 | | 2021 | | | 2022 | |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------|
| | Budget | Actual | AGM Budget | Revised Budget | Actual | Budget | Actual |
| Fees | 59,000 | - | 46,984 | 40,610 | 40,232 | 42,244 | |
| Nationals and WS | 18,930 | - | 18,200 | 14,883 | 14,883 | 14,883 | |
| Insurance | 2,240 | - | 2,240 | 2,894 | 2,694 | 2,894 | |
| Other income - Grant | - | 20,000 | | | | | |
| TOTAL INCOME | 80,170 | 20,000 | 67,424 | 58,387 | 57,809 | 60,021 | |
| Nationals and WS | 20,500 | 128 | 18,669 | 15,513 | 15,444 | 15,513 | |
| NTL Out | 4,000 | - | 3,000 | 2,000 | - | 3,000 | |
| Insurance | 6,919 | 6,919 | 6,919 | 5,255 | 5,255 | 7,029 | |
| BSUK Service fee | 7,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 | - | 2,250 | |
| Development | 4,000 | 2,033 | 2,250 | 2,250 | 1,000 | 3,500 | |
| GBR teams | 28,950 | 13,485 | 21,650 | 9,110 | 10,553 | 22,935 | |
| Marketing / Events | 11,100 | 5,543 | 6,900 | 3,603 | 5,287 | 10,050 | |
| Meetings / Travel | 9,700 | 6,639 | - | 102 | 84 | 4,400 | |
| Financial costs | 7,350 | 7,283 | 8,350 | 7,250 | 6,978 | 8,250 | |
| TOTAL COSTS | 99,519 | 45,029 | 70,738 | 48,083 | 44,601 | 76,927 | |
| RESULT FOR YEAR | - 19,349 | - 25,029 | - 3,314 | 10,304 | 13,208 | - 16,906 | |

| BALANCE SHEETS | Forecast | Actual | Forecast | re-Forecast | Actual | Forecast | Actual |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|--------|
| | 2020 | | 2021 | | | 2021 | |
| Assets | | 44,098 | | | 48,725 | | |
| Liabilities | | - 13,708 | | | - 5,127 | | |
| Net Assets | | 30,390 | | | 43,598 | | |
| Reserves b/f | 55,419 | 55,419 | 30,390 | 30,390 | 30,390 | 43,598 | |
| Profit / -Loss | - 19,349 | - 25,029 | - 3,314 | 10,304 | 13,208 | - 16,906 | |
| Reserves c/f | 36,070 | 30,390 | 27,076 | 40,694 | 43,598 | 26,692 | |

BSF TEAM AFFILIATION FEES: 2022

The BSF had no membership income whatsoever in 2020 but a considerable amount of non-discretionary expenditure, and the result was to reduce the BSF's reserves to a dangerously low level.

A £20,000 grant from Sport England, secured with the help of BaseballSoftballUK, kept the Federation in the black, and the BSF Executive decided that fees would not be raised in 2021, when play resumed with close to a full season, because many people were still struggling financially as a result of the pandemic.

However, BSF income from membership fees was down in 2021 because of the loss of teams and leagues due to Covid, with no guarantees that income will rebound significantly in 2022. The Federation still needs to build back reserves and will have a heavy programme of expenditure in 2022 assuming no further disruptions from Covid.

All this had led the BSF Executive to propose a small increase in BSF membership fees for the 2022 season. The new fees are shown below, with 2021 fees in brackets.

Full-Member League Teams: £210 (£200)

Associate Member Teams: £110 (£100)

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: £80 (£75)

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

Special Membership: £80 (£75)

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

GB National Teams: £30 (£25)

- 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

- 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 2022.

BSF ANNUAL AWARDS

The BSF Annual Awards, mostly based on the 2021 season, will be announced during the AGM.

BSF HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS

Names of people who have been nominated and voted into the BSF Hall of Fame for the 2022 Induction will be announced during the AGM, and in an article on the BSF website following the AGM. Hall of Fame plaques will be presented to the new Hall of Fame members, where possible, at selected tournaments during the 2022 playing season.

BSUK COACH & VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Softball and baseball coaching and volunteer awards for achievements in 2021 have been announced by BSUK in conjunction with their annual Coach Summit, which was held remotely at the end of January and beginning of February. 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 2020.

Winner: Holly Ireland, RBI Wales

Holly has done great work to establish a fastpitch softball programme in South Wales, integrated with Academy programmes and the Great Britain Fastpitch League weekends. Holly Ireland has recruited and trained a group of young athletes from around Cardiff via the Cardiff RBI programme. Under her guidance, a group of these players has been selected to attend the MLB Cadet Camp and have gone onto make respective GB Junior National Teams. Working within local lockdown rules, Holly has been excellent at managing these junior athletes and ensuring each one of them gets better. Holly has also recruited a team of helpers around her to ensure the sustainability of RBI Wales, where she is the driving force. Great management and leadership of the RBI Wales programme has delivered strong outreach programmes and coaching sessions.

Other nominees:

Julie Spittle, GB Under-13 Cubs

Natalie Fox, Lytham St Anne's Softball Club

Softball Adult Coach of the Year Award

Given to an outstanding contributor to adult softball coaching in Great Britain in 2020.

Winner: Trevor Sykes, Coventry Blitz Softball Club

Trevor has been a lead coach at Coventry Blitz since 2017. This year the club has seen a big expansion in membership and the launch of an indoor programme for the first time. Trevor volunteers his time weekly to coach players across a range of abilities and always makes beginners feel welcome and supported. With no league in the locality, he also supports the team to attend tournaments across the country as well as helping to organise and umpire local friendlies. Trevor is inclusive and generous, and Coventry Blitz would not have seen the growth they have this year without him.

Other nominees:

Leanne Plummer, Leicester Royals

Adam Bee, MK Dons Softball

Baseball Awards

Winners of baseball coaching awards were:

Baseball Youth Coach of the Year: Will Zucker, Herts Baseball Club

Baseball Adult Coach of the Year: Martin Andrews, Leicester Diamond Baseball Club

General Awards

This year, general awards were 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 **Ian Tomlin**, Head Coach of the GB Under-18 and Under-23 Men's Fastpitch Teams and the architect of the current GB Youth Fastpitch programme.

Ian Tomlin's work and dedication to men's fastpitch has led him to coaching and/or managing with all three national teams: the Senior Men, the Under-23s and the Under-18s. Through his efforts, the men's fastpitch programme has continued to grow and thrive and in 2021 Ian coached both the Under-23 and Under-18 teams to successful years in the Great Britain Fastpitch League. During the winter, Ian has played a dedicated part in the Softball Academy, helping to develop athletes in the off-season.

Other nominees for this award were Holly Ireland from RBI Wales and Chris Ward from Guildford Mavericks Baseball Club.

The **Young Coach of the Year Award**, given to an outstanding young coach under the age of 25 who has contributed to baseball or softball coaching in Great Britain in 2020, was won by **Jess Vernon** from Belles Baseball. Other nominees were Paul Miquel Mir from Bristol Baseball and Rose Bhanji from the London Mets Baseball and Softball Club.

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 **Amanda 'Doris' Hocking** of Women's Baseball UK. Other nominees were Alan Le Marquand from Maidenhead Softball Club, Chris Carter from Kent Buccaneers Baseball Club and Kellie Whitaker from GB Slowpitch and Manchester Thunder.

ELECTION OF BSF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

All current members of the BSF Executive listed below except President Ieuan Gale and Communications and Marketing Officer Simon Mortimer are coming to the end of a two-year term and intend to seek re-election. Because no nominations for any of these positions were received from the community before the deadline, candidates currently serving and/or standing for positions at the 2022 AGM are:

DIRECTORS:

| <u>Role</u> | <u>Re-Standing</u> | <u>Serving</u> | <u>Nominated</u> |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| President | | Ieuan Gale | |
| Treasurer | Laura Burkhardt | | |
| Competitions Officer | Liz Graham | | |
| National Teams Officer | Position vacant | | |

OTHER ROLES:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| Technical Officer | Pete Saunders | | |
| Coaching Officer | Michael Lott | | |
| Communications and Marketing Officer | | Simon Mortimer | |
| Safeguarding Officer | Stella Ackrell | | |

GENERAL OFFICERS (up to six specific Officer roles can be created by the Executive):

| | | | |
|---|------------------|--|--|
| General Officer/Finance | Mike Jennings | | |
| General Officer/National Championship Support | Lesley Morisetti | | |

BSF STAFF:

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.

CONSTITUTIONAL MOTIONS TO THE 2022 BSF AGM

From the BSF Executive

No Constitutional motions are being presented to the 2022 BSF AGM.

MOTIONS OR PROPOSALS TO THE 2022 BSF AGM

*There were no motions or proposals to the AGM this year
from the BSF Executive or from members.*



BASU REPORT

Pete Saunders
BSF Technical Officer

About 80% of our usual softball season was held in 2021 and BASU was able to provide umpires to cover all relevant national events.

Tournaments played (41) and tournament days (60) were the same as in 2019 but the number of games umpired in 2021 (2195) was only 72% of the 2019 figure (3065). The loss of one of the Diamond tournaments may account for some of this. The number of active umpires in 2021 (55) was 83% of the number in 2019 (66).

Training in 2021

No BASU training courses were run in 2021 (and only two in 2020), but BASU has used the Covid break to look at how training has been run historically and try to modernise methods of delivery. Accordingly, the BASU two-day qualifying course has now been set up online.

BASU can still use help with getting this fully in place and anyone who would like to get involved should contact BASU Training Officer Pete Saunders (pete.saunders@britishsoftball.org).

In 2022, online courses will be run based on regions but in future years this might be changed to an "on demand" system.

A Softball Europe slowpitch umpire course did run online during the spring of 2021, with assessments carried out at the Softball World Series Tournament in September and three BASU umpires qualified and will get the chance to umpire at a European tournament in 2022: Stephen Coyle, Chris Lunn and Jason Smith.

Training in 2022

Here is a summary of how we intend the BASU online training course to run from now on:

The Course will consist of four blocks. For each block you will be required to view a series of online training videos in your own time, answer questions related to the videos and then attend a scheduled Zoom meeting (tutorial) so that any questions you have can be answered before moving on to the next block. We'll use the answers to the questions in the block of videos as a starting point for the "tutorial". The tutorials are planned to be two weeks apart and should each last an hour.

There will be an online quiz at the end of the course which will be open-book, but students will be expected to score at least 80%.

A Practical Day will involve minimum classroom work and plenty of on-field training, with a game or two set up for practice. Regions will be responsible for organising a practice area plus an indoor area that can be used for any classroom work, and for finding teams to play in the practice game. We will not require experienced umpires to attend the Practical Day but they can if they wish.

Once you have passed the BASU Course you will need to arrange a game assessment. These can be carried out at a tournament (contact the Crew Chief for the tournament to arrange this) or at a league game if you play in the Bristol, Windsor and Maidenhead, East Midlands or Manchester Leagues, since BASU assessors play in these leagues.

You can decide when your region's Course will start and when you would want the Practical Day, though we will need to make sure a trainer is available for the day you require. Please bear in mind that we have a limited pool of trainers so there may be some negotiating to be done to get dates that work for everyone.

As we have had a couple of years with reduced umpiring opportunities, I would encourage all umpires to complete the online course to revise anything they may have forgotten, along with anyone who wants to umpire or just learn the rules.

The BASU online resource is open to anyone at no cost, and if you just want to get a better idea of the rules you can "dip in" and watch what you want. You only need to complete the course and take the quiz if you wish to become a qualified BASU umpire.

The changes required to bring the BASU Course online has very much been a team effort, but particular thanks must go to Andy Shephard, Chris Lunn, Chris Moon, Jason Smith and Mike Jennings.

Of course, the work does not stop here: we will be adding new videos and improving old ones for quite a while.

There are no plans for BASU to run an advanced course in 2022.

Bat certification

There has been some confusion regarding bat eligibility, so to clarify:

The BSF intends to stay as we are for the foreseeable future – so 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!

Rules

Following the usual four-year cycle, Rulebooks for 2022-2025 (for fastpitch and slowpitch) are due to be published this year.

Whether this will be delayed by the postponement of the WBSC Congress planned for April 2022, at which rule changes would have been approved, remains to be seen.

2022 SOFTBALL CALENDAR

(as of 8 February 2022)

Slowpitch = Black
Fastpitch = Red

| DATE | EVENT | VENUE | ORGANISER |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Jan 1-2 | | | |
| Jan 8-9 | | | |
| Jan 15 Jan 16 | Windsor and Maidenhead Winter Indoor Tournament | Rickmansworth | tournaments@ wmsoftball.com |
| Jan 20-23 | GB Women's Training Camp | Clearwater, Florida | Simon Mortimer |
| Jan 22 Jan 23 Jan 29-Feb 4 | GB Slowpitch Trials BSUK Coach Summit | TBC Remote sessions | Kellie Whitaker Colin Barrett |
| Feb 5 Feb 6 | 2022 BASU AGM | Marlow | Jes Sandhu |
| Feb 11-13 | WBSC Europe Congress | Slovenia | Ieuan Gale |
| Feb 19 Feb 20 | GB Slowpitch Trials BSF League Heads Forum | TBC Remote meeting | Kellie Whitaker Bob Fromer |
| Feb 26 Feb 27 | 2022 BSF AGM | Remote meeting | Bob Fromer |
| Mar 5-6 | | | |
| Mar 12-13 | | | |
| Mar 19-20 Mar 20 | BUCS National University Softball Finals Windsor and Maidenhead Spring Indoor Tournament | Farnham Park Rickmansworth | Chris Rawlings tournaments@ wmsoftball.com |
| Mar 26-27 | | | |
| Apr 2-3 | Chicks w/ Sticks and Let the Boys Play Tournaments 1 | Farnham Park | Alan Le Marquand |
| Apr 9-10 Apr 9 | North West Series 1 Windsor First Ball | Manchester Farnham Park | Luis Arrebillagas tournaments@ wmsoftball.com |

| DATE | EVENT | VENUE | ORGANISER |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Apr 16-17 | EASTER WEEKEND | | |
| Apr 23-24 Apr 23 | Great Britain Fastpitch League 1 Manchester Firstball (Rec) | Farnham Park Parrs Wood, Mcr | David Morris TBC |
| Apr 24 | Cardiff First Ball Manchester Firstball (Comp) | Cardiff Parrs Wood, Mcr | Matt Andrews TBC |
| Apr 30-May 1 Apr 30 | BSUK Slowpitch Cup (Rec) Alex Hall Memorial Tournament | Farnham Park Parrs Wood, Mcr | Liz Knight Mike Connolly |
| May 7-8 | BSUK Slowpitch Cup (Comp) | Farnham Park | Liz Knight |
| May 14-15 May 14 | Diamond Series 1 Manchester LGBT Tournament | Farnham Park Manchester | Diamond Softball Luis Arrebillagas |
| May 21-22 | NSL League Play 1 | Farnham Park | Liz Graham |
| May 28-29 | Great Britain Fastpitch League 2 GB v Sweden Men's Fastpitch Series Liverpool Tournament | Farnham Park Farnham Park Widnes | David Morris Colin Barrett Stephen Shearer |
| Jun 4-5 | NSL League Play 2 Diffodil Tournament | Farnham Park Cardiff | Liz Graham Dave McCarthy |
| Jun 11-12 | Great Britain Fastpitch League 3 Leeds Tournament | Farnham Park Leeds | David Morris Daniel Simpson |
| Jun 14-18 | European Men's Slowpitch Championship | Colorno, Italy | Kellie Whitaker |
| Jun 18-19 | Diamond Series 2 North West Series 2 | Farnham Park Manchester | Diamond Softball Luis Arrebillagas |
| Jun 25-26 | BSF Single-Sex Slowpitch National Championships | Bristol | Holly Ireland |
| Jun 27-Jul 2 | European Under-22 Women's Fastpitch Championship | Kunovice, CZ | Whitney Hollis |
| Jul 2-3 | Bristol Somerball Diamond Series 3 | Keynsham Farnham Park | Jo Newton Diamond Softball |
| Jul 5-9 | European U-23 Men's Fastpitch Championship | Sezimovo Usti, CZ | Jill Russell |
| Jul 9-10 | NSL League Play 3 (for NSL2 and NSL3 only) | Farnham Park | Liz Graham |
| Jul 11-16 | European Co-ed Slowpitch Championship | Ljubljana, Slovenia | Kellie Whitaker |
| Jul 16-17 | Windsor Invitational Tournament | Farnham Park | tournaments@ wmsoftball.com |

| DATE | EVENT | VENUE | ORGANISER |
|-------------|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Jul 18-23 | European U-15 Women's Fastpitch Championship | Enschede, NL | Mary Murray |
| Jul 23-24 | Labor Day Tournament NSL League Play 3 (for NSL1 only) | Leicester Farnham Park | TBD Liz Graham |
| Jul 24-30 | European Women's Fastpitch Championship | Sant Boi, Spain | Simon Mortimer |
| Jul 30-31 | Manchester Main Tournament Great Britain Fastpitch League 4 | Parrs Wood, Mcr Farnham Park | TBC David Morris |
| Aug 6-7 | BSF Co-ed Slowpitch <u>League</u> National Championships | Farnham Park | Liz Graham |
| Aug 6 | Liverpool LGBT Tournament | Liverpool | Luis Arreivillagas |
| Aug 10-13 | Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy for U-13 Teams | Collecchio, Italy | Julie Spittle |
| Aug 13-14 | Bristol Wreck Tournament Daughters of the Dirt and Sons of Pitches Tournament | Keynsham Farnham Park | Jo Newton Sara Daughtrey |
| Aug 15-20 | European Women's Cup | Avigliana, Italy | Sian Wigington |
| Aug 20-21 | North West Series 3 Chicks w/ Sticks and Let the Boys Play Tournaments 2 | Manchester Farnham Park | Luis Arreivillagas Alan Le Marquand |
| Aug 22-27 | European Men's Fastpitch Super Cup | Prague, CZ | Trent Nash |
| Aug 27-28 | Edinburgh Festiball | Edinburgh | Liz Graham |
| Sep 3-4 | BSF Co-ed Slowpitch <u>NSL</u> National Championships | Farnham Park | Liz Graham |
| Sep 10-11 | Softball World Series | Farnham Park | Bob Fromer |
| Sep 11 | Hit and Run 9 | TBC | Alan Le Marquand |
| Sep 17 | Birmingham LGBT Tournament Windsor Last Ball | Birmingham TBC | Luis Arreivillagas tournaments@ Wmsoftball.com |
| Sep 18 | | | |
| Sep 24 | Codebreaker's Cup | Milton Keynes | Hedley Bevan |
| Sep 25 | | | |
| Oct 1-2 | Great Britain Fastpitch League 5 | Farnham Park | David Morris |
| Oct 8-9 | Chicks w/ Sticks and Let the Boys Play Tournaments 3 | Farnham Park | Alan Le Marquand |

| DATE | EVENT | VENUE | ORGANISER |
|------------------|--|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Oct 15-16 | | | |
| Oct 22-23 | | | |
| Oct 22-30 | WBSC U-23 Men's Fastpitch World Cup | Argentina | Jill Russell |
| Oct 29-30 | | | |
| Nov 5-6 | | | |
| Nov 12-13 | | | |
| Nov 19 Nov 20 | Windsor and Maidenhead Autumn Indoor Tournament | Rickmansworth | tournaments@ wmsoftball.com |
| Nov 26-27 | | | |
| Dec 3-4 | | | |
| Dec 10 Dec 11 | Not Jingles Balls Tournament | Rickmansworth | Alan Le Marquand |
| Dec 17-18 | | | |
| Dec 24-25 | | | |
| Dec 31-Jan 1 | | | |