

BSF EXECUTIVE MEETING REPORT:

11 AUGUST 2022

The BSF Executive held its latest monthly videoconference meeting on the evening of Thursday 11 August. Below is a report on the main discussions and decisions.

Attendance

Present: Ieuan Gale (President), Laura Burkhardt (Treasurer), Liz Graham (Competitions and Membership Officer), Simon Mortimer (Marketing and Communications Officer), Stella Ackrell (Safeguarding Officer), Pete Saunders (Technical Officer), Mike Jennings and Lesley Morisetti (General Officers), Bob Fromer (Administrator).

Apologies: Mike Lott (Coaching Officer).

Guest: John Boyd (BSUK).

Opening points

Poll on the use of 11" balls for women in slowpitch softball. Mike Jennings is keen to poll female players in the UK on the use of 11" balls in co-ed play. The question to be put to female NSL players is: "The WBSC currently mandates the use of an 11" ball for female batters in co-ed slowpitch competition – do you agree with this?" Competitions Officer Liz Graham has circulated this question to NSL players; Mike will poll female players at the Softball World Series.

WBSC Slowpitch Working Group. Mike Jennings reported that there have been no further meetings of the WBSC Slowpitch Working Group, in part because the 2023 WBSC Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup has now been confirmed. However, there is still a need for the WBSC to define hosting requirements, because until that happens, no one will be able to bid for the tournament. Mike will keep chasing on this question.

Financial matters

Budget v Actual. BSF Treasurer Laura has updated the BSF's Budget v Actuals position as of 1 August, and this has now been circulated to members of the Executive. At the moment, the BSF is over its projections on income and under its projections on expenditure. With only two months remaining in the financial year and with the playing season nearly over, this picture is unlikely to change very much, and means there should be money at the end of the season to help the BSF build back reserves.

Costs for National Team training at Farnham Park. Bob Fromer reported to the Executive that the bill for national team training at Farnham Park in this financial year will be £970 against a budgeted amount of £2000. This represents good news and bad news. The good news is that the BSF has underspent, in

part because BSUK did not charge for “off-peak” (weekday) training carried out by the GB Women and U-22 Women, who held training camps in the UK on their way to European competitions. The bad news is that the underspend suggests how difficult it is to find pitches available at “peak times” (weekends during the season) that national teams can use. The issue of future national team training at Farnham Park and elsewhere will need to be explored in the off-season.

Incorporating new formats in BSF Articles

As requested by the BSF, BSUK CEO John Boyd has drafted a series of clauses, designed to be added to both BSF and BBF Articles of Association, giving the Federations jurisdiction in this country over new WBSC formats including Baseball5, Baseball/Softball E-sports, and Para-sports such as Blind Baseball and Wheelchair Softball, and setting out how the Federations will work together, along with BSUK, to organise, promote and develop these formats.

The Executive was happy with the wording of the clauses designed for the BSF Articles and will put them forward as a Constitutional motion to the AGM in February, though accepting that the BSF and the BBF will first need to agree on how these new formats will be handled.

These are not abstract or future considerations. The BSF and BBF were recently asked to agree that a team representing Great Britain at a Blind Baseball tournament in the Netherlands this month could be considered as a full national team, the BBF will be organising a Baseball5 National Championship in September, and Baseball5 will be on the programme for the Olympic Youth Games in 2026.

Equipment exchange at Farnham Park

Baseball Outlet will soon be opening an equipment stall in the new BSUK building next to Pitch 1 at Farnham Park, and they have agreed to take in donated equipment that the BSF can put towards development needs.

The BSF will need to find someone to take charge of this project and talk to Baseball Outlet about how it will work and will need to publicise this facility to the community. With the season coming to a close, however, the impact is more likely to be felt next year.

NSL National Championships

BSF Competitions Officer Liz Graham reported that schedules have been drawn up for the NSL Co-ed Slowpitch National Championships on 3-4 September at Farnham Park and all arrangements are in hand.

The decision to play the NSL1 and NSL2 finals at the same time, possible because there is no webstreaming from the event this year, has proved popular with teams because it will reduce the waiting time for teams in the NSL1 final and means that the tournament can finish earlier. It should also encourage more people to stay and watch the finals.

Softball World Series

Bob Fromer told the Executive that arrangements are mostly now in hand for the 2022 Softball World Series Tournament, scheduled for 10-11 September at Farnham Park. This year's tournament will be contested by 14 teams, including five from overseas, but even with those numbers, which are down on pre-pandemic levels, the tournament will need to use a pitch at Dair House School, across the road from Farnham Park, because of the lack of pitches available at the facility in September.

Several teams that would normally attend the World Series, including the Czech and Dutch national teams and domestic teams representing Wales and Scotland, are not participating this year. When these teams return in future, as they intend to, it may be that pitch availability at Farnham Park in September means the tournament will need to look for a larger venue.

National teams

The Executive has extended congratulations to all seven GB teams that have participated in European Championships this summer, and particularly to the Men's and Co-ed Slowpitch Teams for their gold medals and the GB Women's Fastpitch Team for their silver medal.

The GB Co-ed Slowpitch Team has qualified for next year's inaugural WBSC Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup, and the GB Women have qualified for the Group Stage of the WBSC Women's World Cup in 2023.

Plaque for Libby Moss

The Executive agreed to the purchase of a plaque to be presented to former BSF Executive member Libby Moss at the European Men's Super Cup on behalf of the BSF as she retires from involvement with Softball Europe as a TC. Mike Jennings will make the presentation. Libby is a member of both the BSF and Softball Europe Halls of Fame.

Next meeting

The BSF Executive will hold its next videoconference meeting on Thursday 8 September.

Anyone from the Executive or the softball community who has an item to bring to the meeting should contact BSF Administrator Bob Fromer on: bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org.