



## **BSF EXECUTIVE MEETING REPORT: 12 MAY 2022**

The BSF Executive held its latest monthly videoconference meeting on the evening of Thursday 12 May. 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), Mike Lott (Coaching Officer), Pete Saunders (Technical Officer), Mike Jennings and Lesley Morisetti (General Officers), Bob Fromer (Administrator).

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

**Guest:** John Boyd (BSUK).

### **WBSC Europe Official to visit UK**

WBSC Europe Softball Commission President Gabriel Waage is coming to the UK for the weekend of 21-22 May to present Softball Europe Hall of Fame awards to three British inductees: players Brett Gibbens and Steph Jardine and umpire Chris Moon.

The awards will be presented by Gabriel and BSF President Ieuan Gale at a ceremony at the Home Plate clubhouse at Farnham Park following the close of NSL play on Saturday 21 May and before the first game takes place in the new All Stars Fastpitch League, where Steph Jardine will throw out the first pitch.

The ceremony is expected to begin at around 6.20 pm.

This will be Gabriel Waage's first visit to the UK and will give him a chance to meet with BSUK and BSF Board members, have a first-hand look at Farnham Park and see some of the best action that British slowpitch and fastpitch can offer.

## Insurance

Mike Lott told the meeting that Stephen Shearer from the Liverpool League, who works in the insurance industry, has agreed to work with BSUK and the BSF Executive in managing the BSF's insurance policies after this year, taking over from Mike Jennings.

## Registration update

With the end-of May deadline approaching for leagues and independent teams to register with the BSF and pay team affiliation fees, Competitions and Membership Officer Liz Graham reported that all NSL teams have now registered and paid, along with some non-NSL independent teams.

Money is also starting to come in from leagues, and the pace should pick up over the next couple of weeks.

## BSUK Facilities Grants

BaseballSoftballUK has a Facilities Fund, consisting of around £10,000 of its own money, which is used to give grants for grassroots facility development and/or improvements based on application from clubs or leagues. In April, it was announced that seven grants had been awarded: six to baseball clubs and one to a joint baseball/softball club.

Of 18 expressions of initial interest, only two had been from softball and neither of those organisations submitted a final application.

BSUK CEO John Boyd was asked why almost all of the money had gone to baseball and what could be done to raise awareness of the Fund within softball and develop more softball applications.

John noted that slowpitch softball doesn't have the same facility requirements as baseball or fastpitch, and so a different approach is needed. BSUK will shortly refresh its Facility Strategy, now over a decade old, and will look closely at what each format needs. While BSUK will be proactive in looking at softball needs, especially for slowpitch, the BSF Executive can also be active in speaking to leagues about places where slowpitch or fastpitch facility development would be useful.

It would also be helpful to have publicity about the Facilities Fund on the BSF website and social media.

## BSF Flickr account

The BSF has now set up its own Flickr account to store and organise softball photographs for use on the BSF website and in other applications, and a wide range of historical softball photos from BSUK's Flickr account are currently being uploaded to the BSF account.

BSF Marketing and Communications Officer Simon Mortimer has set up the BSF's account and will provide a brief tutorial at some point for any BSF Executive members who want access. Anyone who uses photographs from the account will need to be aware of the need to credit photographers and of BSUK and BSF safeguarding regulations around the use of images.

The BSF and BSUK will need to talk about the most efficient way to share new softball photographs going forward.

## National Championships and other BSF tournaments

**Single-Sex Slowpitch Nationals.** Holly Ireland, who is organising this tournament for the BSF, reported that 26 teams (14 women and 12 men) have indicated interest, and a final determination is being made as to whether there are enough pitches at the proposed venue in Keynsham, near Bristol to accommodate this number of teams.

While the venue is less geographically central than the location previously used for this tournament in Birmingham, a great deal more support and assistance in staging the tournament is available from the new facility. The fact that entries are slightly down on pre-pandemic levels may be a function of the change of location but may also reflect current economic conditions.

**Softball World Series.** Bob Fromer told the Executive that 15 teams will take part in the World Series this year, including five from outside the UK. The tournament will be held at Farnham Park, where a maximum of five pitches are available at that time of year (the tournament will be played on 10-11 September). Demand for places was slightly down this year. At home, this was because Wales and Scotland are not sending squads this year, and with regard to overseas teams, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands are unable to attend this year, though they hope to return next year.

## International issues

**Slowpitch World Cup.** Mike Jennings told the meeting that the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC), at its Congress in Taipei in early July, will clarify what will be required for a country to host the first-ever WBSC Slowpitch World Cup for national teams, scheduled for 2023, and will define other aspects of the competition.

This, and the fact that the meeting will be an Election Congress, makes it imperative that the BSF is represented, and John Boyd has suggested the creation of an International Representation Steering Group to consider the issues that the Congress will present.

## Nominations to the WBSC Hall of Fame

The WBSC has called for nominations for its Softball Hall of Fame, with decisions to be made at their biennial Congress in Taipei in July.

However, the deadline for providing nominations and a great deal of supporting information was 15 May, so the BSF will delay making nominations until the run-up to the next WBSC Congress in 2024.

Federations can make a maximum of three nominations in each cycle (with at most two from one gender), and the BSF is considering around half a dozen possibilities from among players, coaches and administrators. Work on accumulating the evidence to support future nominations will begin later in the year.

### Athlete Representative for the WBSC Europe Board

Going forward, the WBSC Europe Board will include two Athlete Representatives – one for baseball and one for softball – and nominations can be put forward before 15 June. The Softball Athlete Rep will be elected by a vote of players participating in the European Women's Championship at the end of July.

The BSF is keen to put forward a candidate for the position if a current or recent GB Women's Team athlete can be found who is qualified and willing, and Simon Mortimer will lead the effort to see if such a candidate can be found.

Throughout the sporting world, athlete representatives increasingly have a seat at the table on the Boards of Federations and other organisations, and as John Boyd pointed out, we need to ensure that there are Athlete Representatives before long on the BSF and BSUK Boards, the GB Management Committee and the GB Softball Performance Management Group.

### National Teams

**National Teams Officer.** The BSF Executive has decided that the vacant position of National Teams Officer (NTO) will be filled on an interim basis by BSF President Ieuan Gale. The NTO is the main point of contact between the BSF Executive and the GB Management Committee.

**Gift exchange at international tournaments.** Before and then during the pandemic, the practice of teams exchanging pins or other small gifts when they met in international competition had begun to dwindle, leading to the question of whether our teams should keep doing this. However, the practice seems to have revived this year and all GB Team Operations Managers are in favour of our continuing to do it. Simon Mortimer will oversee sourcing of GB gifts.

**GB Softball Alcohol Policy.** Kim Hannessen, who is the Head of Sports Therapy for GB Softball programmes, submitted a policy document for the BSF Executive to review on the use of alcohol by players and staff at and following GB Softball training camps and tours. The policy is still a work in progress, but Kim wanted to be sure that the BSF was happy with the basic philosophy expressed in the document. The Executive had no problems with the philosophy but raised some questions about implementation and will look forward to seeing a final draft, which will incorporate research currently being done by Gary Anderson, BSUK's Head of Performance Systems, on best practice in other sports.

**National Team fundraising.** BSF Marketing and Communications Officer Simon Mortimer noted that national team fundraising plans need to be reviewed by the GBMC or the BSF before implementation, to make sure there is no clash with commercial interests or international softball regulations.

## BASU update

BSF Technical Officer Pete Saunders told the Executive that the BASU online umpire qualification courses run this year were now coming to an end, with just one more Practical Day left, and overall had been a great success.

Because running the course online was an experiment, no charge was made this year, but Pete suggested there would have to be a charge in future to cover various costs.

Pete will be doing a report on the courses after the last one has finished, and BASU will look at making a few tweaks for next year based on suggestions received.

BSF General Officer and BASU Assistant Umpire-in-Chief Lesley Morisetti said, “People have really enjoyed the course, and have taken the learning back into their local leagues.”

## BSF meeting schedule

BSF meeting dates in the autumn and winter have been changed. The revised schedule of monthly videoconference meetings through December 2022 is as follows, the with BSF’s annual face-to-face weekend meeting set for the first weekend in January 2023.

- Thursday 9 June
- Thursday 7 July
- Thursday 11 August
- Thursday 8 September
- Thursday 13 October
- Thursday 10 November
- Thursday 8 December
- **Face-to-Face Weekend Meeting: 7-8 January 2023**

## Next meeting

The BSF Executive’s next monthly videoconference meeting will be held on the evening of Thursday 9 June.

Anyone from the Executive or the softball community who wants to bring a topic to the meeting should contact BSF Administrator Bob Fromer on: [bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org](mailto:bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org).