

# BSF EXECUTIVE MEETING REPORT: 6 AND 7 FEBRUARY 2023

The BSF Executive held a remote Special Meeting on the evening of Monday 6 February to discuss a number of issues with BaseballSoftballUK, and then held its usual monthly videoconference meeting on the evening of Tuesday 7 February. Below is a report on the main discussions and decisions from both meetings.

## SPECIAL MEETING: MONDAY 6 FEBRUARY

This meeting was held to enable the BSF Executive and BaseballSoftballUK CEO John Boyd to have an in-depth discussion on a small number of key issues. This is often hard to do at a BSF Executive monthly meeting, where there is usually a crowded Agenda.

The following subjects were discussed:

- Implications of a BSF Presidential vacancy.
- Implications for sport in general and the BSF in particular of the Whyte Report on British gymnastics.
- A BSF Athletes Commission and an Athlete Rep on the BSF Executive.

### Attendance:

**Present:** Ieuan Gale (President), Liz Graham (Competitions and Membership Officer), Mike Lott (Coaching Officer), Pete Saunders (Technical Officer), Stella Ackrell (Safeguarding Officer), Mike Jennings and Lesley Morisetti (General Officers), Bob Fromer (Administrator).

**Apologies:** Laura Burkhardt (Treasurer).

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

### BSF Presidency

John Boyd opened the discussion by saying that BSUK was concerned about the stability of the BSF, as its current sole member, in the event that no one takes on the role of BSF President after Ieuan Gale steps down following the 2023 BSF AGM on 25 February.

However, there are now two potential Presidential candidates who may stand with the support of the Executive.

John Boyd also wanted to know what other help the BSF needs given additional vacancies on the Executive and no candidates standing. He was told that we need:

- Support for Laura Burkhardt to ease the time pressures on her role as BSF Treasurer. We are looking for this within the softball community as well as through university connections.
- Communications support, perhaps from BSUK through the SLA, in the absence of a Marketing and Communications Officer.
- Support for national teams in the absence of a National Teams Officer and, for the moment, in the absence of a functioning GB Management Committee (GBMC).

## Implications of the Whyte Report

The recently-published Whyte Report on malpractice in British gymnastics will mean that all NGBs will need to make sure that their policies and procedures on safeguarding and health and safety issues are fit for purpose throughout the sport, from grassroots to performance levels.

There was agreement that ultimate responsibility for this area lies with BSUK and that current provision is appropriate to provide relevant training and to handle cases (leagues, clubs or individuals approach BSF Safeguarding Officer Stella Ackrell and she talks through the matters raised with BSUK Safeguarding Lead Mark Caress, who takes action if needed). But we may well need policies, protocols and codes of conduct for both safeguarding and health and safety issues that are accepted and applied at the level of leagues and teams, for adults as well as under-18s. The BSF may need to set and enforce expectations around this.

## Setting up an Athletes Commission with an Athlete Representative on the BSF Executive

John Boyd told the Executive that its intention to have an Athlete Representative on the BSF Executive was the right thing to do from a governance point of view. But the mechanism for achieving this, the skills and experience required, and the expectations placed on the chosen athlete, need to be considered.

Because there are, in effect, three softball disciplines – slowpitch, women’s fastpitch and men’s fastpitch – the BSF proposes to create a small Athletes Commission with one representative from each discipline, with the Chair of the Commission being the Athlete Rep on the Executive.

In many sports, Athlete Reps represent performance athletes, but this may not be appropriate here because there is already an Athlete Rep on the GB Women’s Team Performance Management Group (PMG) and the plan is to also have an Athlete Rep from the performance side on a reconstituted GBMC. So the Athlete Rep on the BSF Executive, and the members of the Athletes Commission, may be more concerned with domestic play and issues.

The other question is how the members of the Athletes Commission will be found and selected. Initially, the roles could be advertised and the Executive could also approach suitable candidates. But if a number of people come forward to represent a particular discipline, there will need to be some kind of election.

## MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING: TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY

The Executive held its regular monthly videoconference meeting for February on the following evening, Tuesday 7 February.

### Attendance:

**Present:** Ieuan Gale (President), Liz Graham (Competitions and Membership Officer), Mike Lott (Coaching Officer), Pete Saunders (Technical Officer), Mike Jennings and Lesley Morisetti (General Officers), Bob Fromer (Administrator).

**Apologies:** Laura Burkhardt (Treasurer), Stella Ackrell (Safeguarding Officer).

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

### Action Points

The following points arose from a review of the Action List from the BSF Executive meeting of 19 January:

**League management.** Five leagues have already indicated that they will use our new Teamlinkt registration system for league management.

**Data collection survey.** Mike Jennings said that the most recent player survey carried out by BSUK brought back too few responses to be meaningful, especially with regard to inclusivity issues, including disability. What we now plan to do – and Mike will lead on this at the League Heads Forum – is to ask League Heads to provide information on an estimated basis so we have at least a general idea of what's going on around the country.

**Conniburrow.** BSF President Ieuan Gale has been negotiating with the Parish Council that controls the softball facility at Conniburrow in Milton Keynes and has established that hire costs will be £200 for a full day and £100 for a half day. To avoid the Council being called by multiple people, Erica Barrett at BSUK will coordinate all softball bookings at the site.

### Farnham Park

BSUK CEO John Boyd told the BSF Executive that there will be an 8% increase in pitch hire charges at Farnham Park this season to help BSUK cope with the effects of inflation.

However, there will also be a new half-day rate that may help hirers to control costs, and there will be no pitch hire charges for national teams training at Farnham Park provided that no commercial bookings are displaced.

New equipment at Farnham Park this year will include tarps to protect key areas of the infield when it rains, plus extra field drags and sponges to soak up water that may collect on the surface.

### **BSF Annual Awards**

Before the remote 2023 BSF AGM on 25 February, the BSF will notify the winners of Annual Awards that will be announced at the meeting and give them the option to join the meeting for the announcement.

Winners will also be asked to specify major tournaments or other events during the year where they would like to be presented with their award.

### **BSF representative at World Baseball Classic**

The GB Men's Baseball Team will be competing next month in one of the first-round pools at the World Baseball Classic, to be held in Phoenix, Arizona, and the BBF has invited Ieuan Gale to attend the event as an ambassador for the BSF and British Softball.

The BSF has agreed to support Ieuan's flights for the event; the BBF will cover costs while he's there.

There should be people that Ieuan can usefully talk to at the event with regard to baseball and softball participation in the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, and Ieuan's attendance also reflects our desire – and that of the BBF – to work more closely together.

### **Head Coach appointment**

The BSF Executive has approved the appointment of Robbie Robison as the Head Coach for the GB Senior Men's Fastpitch Team, which will be competing in the European Men's Championship this summer.

### **Slowpitch drills videos**

BSF Coaching Officer Mike Lott has begun some preliminary filming of slowpitch coaching drills and will let the Executive know how he would like to proceed.

There is money assigned for this, and the question will be at what standard to do the filming and how the drill videos would be distributed or accessed.

### **BSF container inventory**

Mike Jennings has recently carried out an inventory of the contents of the BSF container at Farnham Park.

The BSF will purchase three or four small lockable sheds to separate the equipment owned by various groups, and once these are in place, the Executive will organise another day at the container, with people from the GBFL and national teams present, to do a definitive inventory and assign everything to its appropriate shed!

### Concussion protocols and actions

There were three reported incidents last year of players who suffered – or may have suffered – a concussion during play, and there is a need for the BSF to establish policy on this issue.

All BSF-sanctioned tournaments are required to have a qualified First Aider or Paramedic present, and we would like to establish that this person will take responsibility for making a judgment on whether a player who has sustained some kind of head injury can return to play.

This in turn will put a responsibility on tournament organisers to ensure that the First Aider or Paramedic at their event is qualified and willing to do this.

BSF's general policy on concussion is based on a Powerpoint presentation given several years ago to GB National Team coaches by Canadian Jessica Mancini MSc PT. The intention is to circulate the Powerpoint to all BSF leagues, though some have already asked for and received it over the past few years.

### US Senior Softball tour in 2024

Senior Softball USA, an organisation that has sent teams of older players to the UK in the past, is planning to send teams to locations in England and Scotland in 2024, and has asked for help from the BSF in organising teams to play against them or events they can compete in.

BSF General Officer Lesley Morisetti will act as the contact for the BSF with the group.

### Next BSF meetings

The BSF's **2023 League Heads Forum** will be held as a remote meeting on the evening of Thursday 16 February. League Heads and members of the BSF Executive have been invited and an Agenda distributed.

The **2023 BSF AGM** will be held as a remote meeting on the afternoon of Saturday 25 February. The AGM Pack has been posted on the BSF website and invitations sent to leagues and to all teams required to attend the meeting as a condition of National Championship participation. BSF President Tom Thornhill, BSUK Board Chair Phil Veasey and BSUK Independent Board member Peter Kim have all been invited as observers.

The BSF's next monthly videoconference meeting will be held on the evening of Thursday 9 March. Anyone from the Executive or the softball community with matters to bring to the meeting should contact BSF Administrator Bob Fromer ([bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org](mailto:bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org)).