

# BSF EXECUTIVE MEETING REPORT: 9 DECEMBER 2021

The British Softball Federation Executive held its last monthly videoconference meeting of the year on the evening of Thursday 9 December. Below is a report on the main discussions and decisions.

## Attendance

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

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

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

## Registration

Competitions and Membership Officer Liz Graham reported that three university teams have so far taken up the BSF's offer of free affiliation for 2021-22.

The offer, made annually to university teams not already playing in a BSF league, is designed to provide insurance cover for university teams that might want to enter BSF-sanctioned tournaments and in general to bring university softball more in contact with the softball mainstream.

BaseballSoftballUK is responsible for university programmes and competitions, and BSUK National Development Manager Chris Rawlings will promote BSF affiliation at university events early next year, including the BUCS University National Championship at Farnham Park in March.

## BSF AGM and League Heads Forum

The 2022 BSF AGM will be held as a remote meeting from **2.00-4.00 pm on Saturday 26 February 2022**. After considering other platforms to host the meeting, including a platform used by Softball Europe, it was decided that the meeting will use the same Google platform that worked successfully for the 2021 AGM.

The 2022 BSF League Heads Forum was originally scheduled as a remote meeting to be held on Saturday 12 February, but this date now clashes with the annual Softball Europe Congress, which members of the BSF Executive will attend.

Accordingly, the League Heads Forum will now be held on **Sunday 20 February from 2.00-4.00 pm**. To keep the meeting manageable as a discussion forum, no more than two representatives from each BSF-affiliated league should attend.

An Agenda has been circulated to League Heads with an invitation to suggest additional topics.

## Report from WBSC Europe Congress

**Constitutional changes.** An Emergency WBSC Europe Congress was held in Rome in November to agree changes to the organisation's Constitution and Statutes that would dissolve the former regional governing bodies – the ESF and CEB – and bind the two sports together in one organisation. The Congress was attended by Ieuan Gale for the BSF, John Boyd from BSUK and Mike Jennings as Softball Europe's Competitions Director.

A number of questions were raised during the meeting by Ieuan and others about various aspects of the new Constitution, including removal of a clause stating that income needs to be spent equally on baseball and softball. In the end the vote was fairly close: there were five votes against and five abstentions, and three more of either would have defeated the proposals.

**Baseball 5.** Baseball 5 and E-Sport versions of baseball and softball were major topics at the Congress, and both the BSF and BBF will be required to alter their own Constitutions to state that they are the governing bodies in the UK for these formats.

WBSC Europe expects the BSF and the BBF to work together to promote and deliver Baseball 5, which despite the name is a baseball/softball programme, and to create a Baseball5 national team programme. But who will take the lead on this in the UK, where we still have separate Federations, remains to be decided.

The BSF will also need to work with the BBF and BSUK on developing Blind Baseball in this country (also a baseball/softball format despite the name and the WBSC's choice as a Paralympic sport) and on whether to adopt the WBSC scoring system and other elements of their far-reaching registration platform.

**Super 6 disappointment.** A major disappointment that became clear at the Congress is that invitations to Softball Europe's Super 6 tournament, designed to create more high-level competition for the best European Women's Fastpitch national teams, will be based on places at the last European Championship.

As the GB Women did not attend the 2021 European Women's Championship for Covid-related reasons, this excludes us from the 2022 Super 6 event, scheduled for early September in Barcelona, despite the GB Women clearly being a top-six team and perhaps the second-best team in Europe at the present time.

GB finished third in the initial Super 6 tournament in 2018 in the Netherlands, despite being without some of their best players.

## National teams

**National Team staff appointment.** The BSF Executive approved the appointment, made by Head Coach Jo Malisani, of Amie Hutchison as the Pitching Coach for the GB Under-15 Women's Fastpitch Team.

Appointment of national team staff such as Assistant Coaches, Batting or Pitching Coaches, and Sports Therapists are in the gift of the team's Head Coach, but the BSF reviews such appointments in case, for any reason, it needs to raise an objection, though this is a situation which rarely occurs.

Head Coach and Team Operations Manager appointments are recommended by the GB Management Committee (GBMC) and need to be approved by the BSF.

**WBSC Online Academy.** The WBSC Academy is an extensive and developing network of online courses (<https://www.wbsc.org/academy/courses>), and some of these may be valuable for some GB National Team coaches. The BSF has a budget line for upskilling national team coaches and has agreed that this money can be used to support anyone taking the WBSC's Level 1 Coach Licensing Programme, which costs US\$80 and is designed to equip current and aspiring coaches with the knowledge and tools to help develop young athletes up to and including the Under-15 age group.

John Boyd told the meeting that for coaches in the GB Women's Fastpitch programme, UK Sport funding could be used to support those taking a WBSC course; BSF funds could support coaches from men's fastpitch or slowpitch. "The BSF, BBF and BSUK need to align our coach development systems with the WBSC," John said.

## Financial matters

BSF Treasurer Laura Burkhardt told the meeting that accounts for 2021 have now gone to the Auditor. Draft accounts and a proposed budget for 2021-22 will be presented at the next BSF Executive meeting on 6 January, but there are a number of key expenditure items in the budget that remain to be resolved.

The 2020-21 Accounts and the 2021-22 Budget will need to be signed off by the Executive at its meeting on 3 February before going to the AGM on 26 February for final approval.

## BASU

**Bat regulations.** BSF Technical Officer Pete Saunders told the Executive that there are no plans to change bat regulations in domestic softball in 2022 to conform to bat regulations recently issued by the WBSC, so both ASA and WBSC-approved bats will continue to be legal here.

It's not clear at the present time whether Softball Europe will adopt WBSC regulations (which ban ASA-approved bats) in 2022, or whether the 2022 European Slowpitch Championship, which is a qualifier for the planned WBSC Slowpitch World Cup in 2023, will have to be played under WBSC bat regulations.

Eventually, however, WBSC regulations are going to prevail, and the current advice to all players, slowpitch and fastpitch, is not to invest a lot of money at this point in ASA-approved bats that will be excluded by WBSC regulations.

### **Next meeting**

The next BSF Executive videoconference meeting will be held on Thursday 6 January 2022.

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