

BSF EXECUTIVE MEETING REPORT: 21 JANUARY 2021

The BSF Executive held its latest monthly video conference meeting on the evening of Thursday 21 January. Below is a journalistic account of the main discussions and decisions.

Attendance

Present: Jenny Fromer (President), Laura Burkhardt (Treasurer), Alexis Markham-Hill (National Teams Officer), Liz Graham (Competitions Officer), Mike Lott (Coaching Officer), Pete Saunders (Acting Technical Officer), Mike Jennings (General Officer), Bob Fromer (Administrator).

Apologies: Stella Ackrell (General Officer).

League Heads Forum

The BSF will hold its annual League Heads Forum as a remote meeting on Saturday 13 February beginning at 2.00 pm.

The decision to separate the League Heads Forum from the AGM this year (the AGM will be held as a remote meeting on 27 February) was made to minimise the time people have to spend in front of a screen on a given day.

Among the topics to be discussed at the League Heads Forum will be the BSF's financial situation after a year with no membership income, prospects for a season in 2021, insurance provision for 2021, plans for slowpitch coach and umpire training and safeguarding concerns.

League Heads will be canvassed regarding topics they would like to add to the agenda.

Insurance

Mike Jennings reported that the BSF is still waiting for quotes from several sources for Personal Accident and Injury insurance that can be purchased by leagues on behalf of all their teams in 2021. These quotes will be brought to the League Heads Forum meeting for consideration by leagues.

Mike will also bring estimates to the meeting of what it would cost an individual team to buy this cover to point up the value of the BSF's offer.

The BSF has already purchased Civil and Public Liability Insurance covering all its member teams and their players for 2021.

National Teams

The BSF has recently been advertising several national team staff positions, and National Teams Officer Alexis Markham-Hill told the meeting that three applications have been received for the GB Senior Men's Fastpitch Team Head Coach position, two applications for Assistant Coach positions and one application for the post of Team Manager. These applications will now be considered by the GB Management Committee and some candidates will be invited for interview.

No applications have yet been received for physiotherapists for national teams (there are several vacancies), but the positions will now be advertised on the UK Sport website as well as on the BSF website. It's possible that more applications for these posts may be received when the Covid situation is clearer.

Alexis also reported that there have been a good number of applications from players wanting to trial for the GB Senior Men's Team and a lot of interest in plans to make this programme more GB-based.

National Softball League

A workshop on playing rules for the National Softball League (NSL) was held at the 2020 BSF AGM, and a number of recommendations were made which the BSF Executive planned to discuss and decide on.

Because there was no playing season in 2020, the Executive has delayed considering these matters until now, but they were the main discussion topic at the January meeting, given the hope that there will be NSL play in 2021.

The following decisions were made regarding play in both NSL1 and NSL2 in 2021:

- 1) When an over-the-fence home run is hit, the batter and all baserunners will simply leave the field rather than circle the bases. This is designed to speed up play with the aim of more innings being played in time-limited games. In order to save even more time, the BSF would like to discourage (but is not banning) the practice where all players leave the dugout to high-five the home run hitter.
- 2) There will be no limit on the number of over-the-fence home runs in NSL games. This will be kept under review and may be re-considered if home runs are seen to dominate too many games.
- 3) **Provided that a substantial majority of NSL captains are in favour after being canvassed**, a 1-and-1 count with "one to waste" will be trialed during a day or weekend of NSL play in 2021 to see whether it has a significant effect in speeding up play and increasing innings. Following such a trial, the BSF will make a decision on whether to implement this rule for 2022.
- 4) For the time being, the BSF does not plan to introduce any regulation on players who are imported from Europe or US bases to play on NSL teams. However, this situation will also be kept under review for the sake of maintaining competitive balance.

- 5) Other measures to speed up games that the BSF would like to encourage are no infield warm-ups between innings, players hustling on and off the field between innings and teams ensuring that they have line-ups ready before a game is due to start.

Next meeting

The BSF Executive's next monthly video conference meeting will be held on the evening of Thursday 11 February.

Anyone on the Executive or in the softball community with items to submit for the agenda should contact BSF Administrator Bob Fromer. [bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org]