

BSF Executive Meeting Report: 12 September 2013

The BSF Executive held a conference call meeting on the evening of Thursday, 12 September. This document is a report from that meeting.

Attendance

Present: Stella Ackrell (President), Vicky Hall (Administrator), Mike Jennings (Treasurer), Fiona Thorley (Tournaments Officer), Beth Perkins (National Teams Officer), Claire Waldron (Youth & Schools Officer), Mark Wigington (Marketing & Communications Officer), Mark Munnery (General Officer).

Apologies: Chris Moon (BASU Representative).

Guest: Bob Fromer (BSUK).

Matters Arising

Earlier this year, and following approval at the AGM, the BSF published mandatory guidelines for players under the age of 18 playing in adult competition. However, the BSF is concerned that many tournaments held this season have not circulated or followed the guidelines.

For next year, all domestic tournaments listed in the Events section on the BSF website will be required to promote the guidelines to their teams and make sure that the necessary procedures are followed in order to ensure the safety of young players.

The guidelines can be downloaded from the BSF website:

<http://www.britishsoftball.org/document/bsf-requirements-for-under-18s-playing-adult-softball>.

Action List

Some of the actions to be undertaken shortly by BSF Executive members are as follows:

- ✦ National Teams Officer Beth Perkins will meet with Jess Casey, who is considering filling the vacant role of BSF Welfare Officer, to talk about the requirements and responsibilities of the post.
- ✦ BSF Administrator Vicky Hall will speak to BSUK Development Manager Patrick Knock about organising a container for the BSF and BBF to share at Farnham Park for equipment, fencing etc.
- ✦ BSF Youth and Schools Officer Claire Waldron will be meeting with BSUK National Development Manager Chris Rawlings and BBF Secretary Giovanni Ciotti to talk about school development opportunities that the Federations might be able to share with BSUK.
- ✦ BSF Marketing and Communications Officer Mark Wigington will be talking to BSUK National Development Manager Will Lintern to finalise details for the softball Talent Development programme for the coming off-season.
- ✦ BSF Treasurer Mike Jennings and BSUK Communications Consultant Bob Fromer will be looking through papers recently given to the BSF by its first President, Stuart Houghton, to see what might be worth preserving for the BSF archives.

- ✦ BSF President Stella Ackrell will be continuing a discussion with Trevor Clissold and Tim Stride in the BSUK Operations Department about how to make league and team pages on the BSF website work better, in the hope that more leagues and teams will use them. This issue will be on the agenda at the 2013 BSF League Heads Forum, which is being proposed for Saturday 16 November (with Sunday 17 November as an alternative), probably in Birmingham.
- ✦ The BSF needs to improve reporting procedures for incidents and accidents without putting too much of a bureaucratic burden on teams and players. The reports can then be reviewed to see if any changes can be made to reduce future incidents. BSUK Operations Manager Tim Stride and BSF Administrator Vicky Hall are developing a simple online form that can be filled out for all types of incidents. For more serious incidents, where an insurance claim may arise, additional details would be needed by BSF's insurers.
- ✦ BSF Administrator Vicky Hall is continuing consultations with medical professionals in softball and with other softball organisations to help the BSF frame guidance around the issue of women playing while pregnant.

Governing documents

With the exception of some rewording to come, the BSF Executive has approved a revised version of the Agreement governing relations between the BSF, BBF and BSUK and revised Memorandum and Articles of Association for BSUK that have been negotiated by the three organisations.

Approval should mean that the documents can be signed and come into effect at the next BSUK Board meeting on 22 September.

Funding for coaches

The BSF will provide some support from its national teams allocation to help GB Under-13 Assistant Coach Beth Perkins and GB Under-16 Head Coach Jeremy Thomas with the costs of spending a week at Florida State University from 25 September to 2 October learning from FSU Head Coach Lonni Alameda and her staff.

The opportunity has been offered to GB coaches by the American Amateur Softball Association as part of their development assistance to the European Softball Federation.

ISF Congress

The biennial ISF Congress will be held in Cartagena, Colombia from October 21-25, and Treasurer Mike Jennings will be attending to represent the BSF.

This is a particularly important Congress, since changes can be made to the ISF playing rules, competition and technical regulations and Constitution, and officers will be elected to the ISF Executive – all of which happens only at four-year intervals.

The British Softball Federation has submitted two proposed rule changes and five proposed changes to the competition and technical regulations.

The rule changes have to do with formalising the use of 11" and 12" balls in ISF co-ed slowpitch play and with specifications for slowpitch balls to be adopted as standard by the ISF.

Other rule changes affecting fastpitch play are being reviewed by GB fastpitch coaches, who will

give their recommendations to Mike Jennings before the Congress.

The changes to regulations proposed by the BSF include the creation of a separate slowpitch rulebook by the ISF, the standardisation of descriptors used for various categories of youth and adult play, a suggestion for using a combination of runs conceded and head-to-head results to break ties among more than two teams, a suggestion for a seeding procedure to produce more even groups in World Championship play and a clarification about the delay or deferment of games played under ISF Championship rules.

Of most interest as far as elections are concerned is whether long-time President Don Porter will be re-elected yet again. This time, he is facing challengers for the position from both Canada and the United States.

National Championships

BSF Tournaments Officer Fiona Thorley reported that the three BSF National Championship tournaments run this year at Farnham Park went well, though the BSF will take on board the need to enhance the environment of National Championships off the field.

Entries were slightly down this year for the Single-Sex Nationals, and the BSF will consider whether to move this tournament back to the Midlands to make travelling easier for teams that come from all over the country.

There are plans for a joint BSF and BBF delegation to meet with BSUK to take an overview of the needs of both federations at Farnham Park next year and to discuss charges.

Meanwhile, BSF President Stella Ackrell has issued invitations to a group of experienced and knowledgeable players and team managers from different leagues and grades of softball to meet during the autumn to discuss issues related to National Championships. The issues include how teams qualify for the different grades of play, the correspondence between grading systems used by leagues and National Championship levels and how the general experience at National Championships can be enhanced.

The Executive has reiterated its intention to run all grades of Co-ed Slowpitch National Championships – including the Premier Nationals – on the same weekend in 2014.

Contributions to Farnham Park

BSUK Joint CEO and Head of Development John Boyd has asked both federations if they can help with the cost of field and maintenance equipment at Farnham Park to ensure that the fields are well-maintained and kept in the best possible playing condition. The capital grants that BSUK used to construct the fields did not cover the cost of equipment such as a field tractor, edger, drags and rakes, additional fencing and bases etc.

The BSF has agreed to purchase a field tractor for the site and to discuss the possibility of other purchases with John Boyd.

US Senior Teams in London

Senior Softball USA has contacted the BSF with a proposal to bring three or four senior men's slowpitch teams to Britain next summer with a view to playing local single-sex and co-ed teams or playing in a local tournament. The visit has been proposed for the weekend of 21-22 June 2014.

The BSF will contact Senior Softball USA official Terry Hennessey to discuss the proposal further.

Three Senior Softball USA teams visited Dublin in June this year and played in a tournament with Irish teams.

Annual face-to-face meeting

The BSF will be holding its annual weekend face-to-face meeting on 19-20 October in Slough (all other meetings are conducted by conference call).

Any member of the softball community who would like to propose an agenda item for the meeting should contact BSF Administrator Vicky Hall (vicky.hall@britishsoftball.org).

2014 Calendar

Dates for BSF National Championships in 2014 have already been proposed by Tournaments Officer Liz Graham and all tournament organisers will be contacted soon so that the softball calendar for 2014 can be constructed.

Uniforms at National Championships

The BSF discussed the uniforms worn by teams such as Blue Steel and Pioneers at the recent Premier Nationals, where there were men's shirts with sleeves and women's shirts without them.

The Executive has decided that this is acceptable, but has stressed the need for male and female uniforms to be as alike as possible, and the BSF would prefer that all players on a team either wear shorts or trousers rather than a mixture of both.

The BSF plans to phase in a requirement for uniforms to have numbers on the back over the next few years, coinciding with a plan for a wider use of line-up cards and eventually official scorers at National Championships.

Any Other Business

- ✦ BSF Treasurer Mike Jennings has been invited to attend a dinner this autumn celebrating the 20th anniversary of softball in Jersey, and the BSF will present the Jersey Softball Association with a gift to mark the occasion.
- ✦ Members of the BSF Executive are also members of BSUK Board committees, and there will now be an agenda item at all BSF Executive meetings calling for reports from these committees.