



BRITISH BASEBALL FEDERATION

The National Governing Body of Baseball

MINUTES OF MEETING OF DIRECTORS -

BRITISH BASEBALL FEDERATION

Note: The BBF board of directors meets a minimum of four times a year (e.g., once a quarter). The BBF board minutes are disclosed publicly to provide our stakeholders with transparent information on the background on several points for consideration, the rationale for decisions, concerns and matters of record. The minutes are not verbatim, instead a balanced account of the BBF Board meeting.

Opening:

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors of Board of Directors duly called and held Tuesday, 4 February 2020 at 20:00 BST by conference call.

BBF Board members

- (G Perez) - President
- (V O'Brien) - Secretary
- (A Kettle) - Treasurer
- (J Pearce) – National Team Programme Official
- (G Erdos) – Officials Commissioner
- (D Kettle) – Coaches Commissioner
- (P Bohn) – Youth Commissioner

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. Announcements

- 2.1. Meeting was quorate.
- 2.2. Declaration of conflicts of interest.
- 2.3. **Coaches Summit 2020 (Jan):** As previously resolved, we attempted to work with BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK) constructively and co-operatively for the Coaches Summit 2020. For example, we notified ISG (September 2019) the sponsor of the BSUK Coaches Convention and BSUK that we propose to work with BSUK in the planning, marketing jointly, split the cost of the venue (50/50) and the overall organisation of the Summit. Considering we are the NGB of the sport and ISG chartered terms of reference are to work with NGBs directly we thought the above would be a compromise and a step in the right direction of co-operation. Further, by splitting the cost of the Summit, we may be able to reduce the cost for attendees, which could drive up attendance. However, BSUK did not engage further with us for the above and went ahead to plan the convention without our involvement. However, BSUK did offer us a ticket for one of our representatives to attend the Summit at a discount.
- 2.4. **Confederation European of Baseball (CEB):** It was resolved, that two board members will be attending the CEB convention which is scheduled for the 8th Feb in Lithuania. The schedule and points of consideration for the convention were disseminated to the board and discussed. Costs to attend were those paid by the attendees i.e., no financial impact on the BBF finances.
- 2.5. **Farnham Park bookings (BSUK):** At the end of 2019, BSUK which manages Farnham Park requested the BBF to provide it in advance a booking schedule for our GB Baseball National Team Try-outs, National Baseball Championships (four divisions) and Youth National Baseball League Championships. It is standing practice that both NGB's (British Softball Federation and the British Baseball Federation - BBF) championships and national teams' bookings would have precedent over other bookings. After submitting our schedule for bookings, we were notified by BSUK they have reduced our bookings by one weekend, and they expect cash payment in advance (Feb 2020), which is the largest cash expenditure of our 2020 operating budget. We have been informed that a softball event was given our



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- requested baseball weekend slot from the previous year. The above puts stress on our national championships scheduling as we planned to add more teams to the playoffs from our leagues. We appealed to BSUK that we were not requesting additional dates from the previous year, rather the exact number of days. However, BSUK rejected our appeal.
- 2.6. **BBF Annual General Meeting (AGM):** It was resolved, as required by the BBF constitution we have planned, and organised our AGM which is to be held in the first quarter of the year. The AGM is scheduled for the 22nd February 2020 in London.
 - 2.7. **2020 BBF Membership drive:** It was resolved, our strategic aim is to increase club membership and team registration by 10%, respectively (from the previous year – as part of our Key Performance Indicators). Our online registration is now active, and fees are being collected.
 - 2.8. **BBF Digital Magazine:** As previously resolved, as part of our communications and marketing plan we have released a series of insights and stories through our BBF digital magazine series. For example, a year in review, GB Baseball, leagues, Little League, teams and more. The above is now being shared with international entities to incorporate it with their news flashes and info about British Baseball.
 - 2.9. **UK Little League:** Over the last ten years, the UK Little League was administered by the unelected District Administrator (DA) of UK Little League, the CEO of BSUK and supported by BSUK. In 2019, the BBF youth clubs lobbied, and it was agreed by them to hold a District Administrator (DA) election as stated in Little League rules. The CEO of BSUK did not submit his nomination to be considered in the UK DA election. For the first time, a UK Little League DA was elected by registered BBF club members and duly appointed.
 - 2.10. **UK Little League registration:** As previously resolved, we have begun to plan, organise and opened online registration for BBF member clubs to register to Little League. That is, under UK Little League rules any team wanting to take part in Little League competitions are required to register with the BBF.
 - 2.11. **UK Little League financial grant:** In 2018, the then CEO of BSUK asked for a UK Little League financial grant to develop Little League in the UK. We have been informed by the CEO of BSUK the **\$14,500 special grant** awarded to him by Little League to develop participation (youth teams) was completely exhausted. Considering youth club teams have to register with the BBF (as the NGB of the sport) to take part in Little League, we found the number of actual youth baseball teams had decreased, not increased. The newly elected UK District Administrator is required to organise and finance the UK Little League Qualifier Tournament scheduled for June. As previously resolved and carried over, to alleviate the financial pressure on the newly elected DA to finance the UK Little League Qualifier, we inquired to Little League whether the UK could apply again for a new financial grant? We were notified the 2018, \$14,500 grant previously awarded to the then acting DA, was to cover the UK until 2021. Thus, no financial grant support was available. It was resolved, the BBF would assist the newly elected UK Little League District Administrator as best as possible with administration support and seeking private donations to offset the cost of the tournament. Further, the BBF youth team fee to enter the UK Little League Qualifiers was set at £15 per team. The mentioned when then be provided to the UK Little League DA, to sub finance the tournament.
 - 2.12. **WBSC World Baseball Ranking ending 31 December 2019.** The WBSC world ranking was announced for our Great Britain Baseball National Team, 31, up from 38 an +18% increase from the previous ranking.

3. Agenda

- 3.1. **Topic #1: Strategy:** As previously resolved and carried over, we discussed strategy, e.g., financial (cost reduction), processes improvement (map, redesign), innovation (grants, awards), learning/education (in person and online), sustainability (design, technology, planning), resilience (business continuity), enhance baseball opportunities (senior and youth), corporate governance enhancement (systems and control), managing risks (identifying, mitigating), etc.

The above to coincide with our constitutional objectives:

- To organise, promote and develop (assigned to BSUK; validation of their performance required) baseball in Great Britain on behalf of its membership.



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- To ensure the operational running of baseball is dealt with in a satisfactory manner.
- To administer a national teams Programme to represent the country in international baseball.
- To carry out any other duties as the National Governing Body of baseball.

Actions agreed to be taken, are we are to focus on the strategy (positioning) discussed, implementation and execution.

3.2 Topic #2: To organise, promote baseball in Great Britain on behalf of its membership.

3.2.1 We discussed out digital marketing plans to enhance our digital footprint by adding to our social media channels (Instagram), understand our key drivers, social media management (content), etc. It was resolved, to continue to enhance our digital marketing plan to promote our sport.

3.2.2 Opening Day: It was resolved, we are to plan, organise
1) Seniors: Opening Day (Sunday 5th April) which would include the National Champions from 2019, and runner ups from the NBL and Triple-AAA competing in doubleheaders at Farnham Park.
2) Youth: the BBF will organise for free and open to the public (regardless of club affiliation) a Mix-n-Match event. For example, youths can come together at Farnham Park and take part in baseball games all day. We would organise and assign players based off of age and skill, to balance the competition. Coaches from around the country would be assigned to different teams with the aim to introduce players to other players and coaches. The mentioned is an excellent way to showcase co-operation, youths can experience different coaching styles and to make new friends and attendees can foster new contacts through our sport. For beginners and their families, it is a way to recruit new players to our sport. Also, it was decided we would organise international coaches (Elite Baseball from the USA) to attend and provide coaching free of charge (through seeking private donations) on the same day.

3.2.3 BBF Youth Competitions: It was resolved, that for BBF Youth Teams we would propose at our AGM to organise monthly Mix-n-Match events at select clubs. The aim of the mentioned was to focus on Mix-n-Match events, so clubs who do not have enough players can Mix-n-Match with other clubs. Further, we aim to focus on players that are developing, e.g., less than 3-4 years' experience. Our research shows we need to plan, organise and establish baseball events, so less skilled and in experienced players can develop gradually into a higher level of skill competition. However, players in this segment are limited because of available playing events. The BBF Mix-n-Match events are designed to resolve the above problem. The plan:
a) We will tender at the AGM for clubs to volunteer to host a Mix-n-Match events from April – August (preferably once a month). In between, events clubs can play inter-squad events or train to minimize travelling. For each event (once a month) the BBF will then organise the umpire(s), event, manage standings, baseball equipment and market the event to the broader baseball community.

3.2.4 Seniors Baseball: It was resolved, and discussed the strategic vision, and purposed objectives for Senior Baseball, e.g., (but not limited to) expanding the playoffs to include more teams and postseason opportunities for all divisions. It was discussed by the Board to build resilience throughout our Senior's leagues strategically, so we discussed options. The Board agreed, **DK** would be assigned to develop the Seniors Leagues for 2020. **DK** has and will further organise surveys and conference calls to engage and get feedback from our senior teams' stakeholders and implement a plan for this season.

3.3 Topic #3: To ensure the operational running of baseball is dealt with in a satisfactory manner.



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3.3.1 BBF National Baseball Rules Handbook: As the NGB of the sport of baseball, it is our responsibility to develop and maintain a national rule book for our sport. Clubs and teams affiliated to the BBF agree to compete and adhere to the nationally and internationally recognised baseball rules for Great Britain. As a result, BBF member clubs and teams play under a centralised set of rules set forth by the recognised NGB of the sport of baseball. Any team competing in our leagues has the opportunity to play for and compete to win a National title. Only winners of the BBF competitions which play under our rules and will be recognised as the National Champion of the UK. It was resolved, to undertake a thematic review of our rule book, plan and redevelop the Handbook. For example, the BBF will: expand the rules, change the format and structure to improve the users' experience, update regulations, expand on coverage, define terminology, cross reference rules with CEB, MLB, WBSC, Little League, Pony and others, to ensure we are consistent, and express the rules clearly. The target date for a deliverable is March. We conducted a survey and will provide the answers and feedback to the attendees of our AGM. Afterwards, we will consider the feedback when we update the rules.

3.3.2 Officials learning/development: It was resolved, annually we need more officials (umpires) who are properly trained and can develop to officiate at the highest level. It is a strategic goal to develop officiating (numbers and knowledge). **GE** as the elected person to oversee officiating has planned, developed and organised the *Umpire Webinar Series* webinars which started last month. We received a brief about the above, and the number of participants, feedback received is promising and the webinars will expand to other topics as well.

3.4 Topic #4: To administer a national teams Programme to represent the country in international baseball. It was resolved, discussed and what the planning for the year relating to all five programs (e.g., U12, U15, U18, U23 and Seniors). For example, we reviewed the plans for our Seniors Teams, to take part at the MLB WBC which is scheduled in March, in Arizona, USA. All plans are set, responsibilities and the budget. Next, we reviewed the plans for the other teams e.g., U12 and U15 to play in European and Qualifies hosted by CEB, later this month in Europe. We discussed, the recruitment and tryout strategy for getting new players involved in the Programme. Tryouts are set for March 2020.

3.5 Topic #5: BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK).

3.5.1 BSUK has been assigned the development of baseball and has received over £6 million in public funding over 10 years.

In 2019, the ex-independent and senior independent directors of BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK) resigned amid allegations against the senior management of the company. The resignation comments and allegations by the BSUK former independent directors, which we were copied and we have great concern e.g., *“the senior management team [BSUK] and others, demonstrate an entrenched set of behaviors that do not allow BSUK to look forward or progress. The continual failure to establish a meaningful relationship with one of the two members of BSUK, has created a dysfunctional working environment. Repeated complaints and supported by substantial evidence, demonstrate the unprofessionalism and inability of BSUK’s senior management to reset the relationship and move into a productive relationship.”*

In July 2019, a BDO assurance review was triggered by Sport England of BSUK. The BDO report aimed to review BSUK’s performance.

We discussed that in January, we met with Sport England, BSUK board members (including the president of BSF) and their CEO and our board member representatives. At that meeting, we were made aware the BDO report (an independent review of BSUK) has been made available to BSUK CEO, their directors



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and president of Baseball Softball Federation (BSF), however, not to us (BBF) which is the other member of the company.

We assume company-specific performance factors like strategy, governance, development was and have been evaluated in the BDO review. Thus, if there are significant issues relating to the mentioned by BSUK in the BDO report, our concerns are the same persons involved in managing the company, e.g., senior management, (addressed in the report) were wilfully withholding the findings in the BDO report from us a member of the company. What is in the report? It was resolved, to continue to lobby for a full copy of the BDO report.

3.5.2 Baseball resilience and accountability strategy to promote our sport

As previously resolved and carried-over, the board discussed, the BBF needs to be informed promptly about the marketplace, events, development numbers and opportunities from our development agency (BSUK). Otherwise withholding information or delays in providing us vital performance information may jeopardise our resilience and agility to promote our sport or take any corrective actions. It was resolved, from BSUK development tasks, as before, there is a need to set an accurate baseline for the number of participants and teams playing our sport in an organised and active manner. We decided we should continue to use the past definition to count players (youth and seniors) as reported by BSUK:

- A player is counted who plays for a team,
- a player who is active on six occasions in competition in his or her team,
- plays on a club team with a name and a captain.
- Note: Moreover, we added to the mentioned players should not be double-counted, and the data needs to be validated.

Considering we are the NGB of baseball and have the largest concentration of youth and adult participants playing in our leagues, we are in the best position to assess and validate BSUK's development reports and performance.

After lobbying BSUK for over a year to provide us with a list of baseball participants and teams they purport to have developed since 2018, we received on the 31st Jan 2020 from their CEO an untitled and unformatted spreadsheet with a list of baseball teams. However, missing from the BSUK CEO, where the number of participants actively playing our sport and are a part of the teams provided. The board discussed the comparison between the reports below.

Table (image one below) before source BSUK participants baseball numbers as reported.

ID	Item	BSUK 2018 reported numbers	Pct increase/decrease 2017 to 2018
1	Total teams	232	14.85% increase (30 new teams)
2	Total players	3,836	13.12 % increase (445 new players)

Table (image two below) a summary and comparison of BSUK 2019 baseball team numbers from above versus Excel spreadsheet (Appendix I) sent to the BBF board on 31 January 2020

ID	Item	BSUK 2018 report	BSUK 2019 report	Pct increase/decrease
1	Total teams	232	305	+31.46% increase
2	Total participants	3,836	Not made available	Still pending for over eight months to the BBF
3	Total senior teams	83	97	+16.86% increase
4	Total youth teams	76	69	-9.21% decrease
5	Total university clubs	29	33	+13.79% increase
6	Total schools	45	106	+140% increase



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	Further analysis below of some numbers above	BSUK 2018 report	BSUK 2019 report	Pct increase/decrease
7	Total BBF youth affiliated teams	65	61	-6.15% decrease
8	Total BBF senior affiliated teams	57	46	-19.21% decrease
9	Total BBL unaffiliated teams	13	15	+15.38% increase
10	Total SWL unaffiliated teams	7	10	+30% increase
11	Total Baseball Scotland teams	6	7	+16% increase
12	Total Seniors teams in Ireland	2	4	+100% increase

Note: To be counted above, a player is defined as someone who takes part in active team which plays a minimum of six baseball games; with a captain and team a name. Moreover, the BBF expects the participants are not double counted.

It was resolved, the BBF question BSUK development numbers provided to us, which have anomalies and errors. As the NGB of the sport we do not support BSUK development reports (2018 and 2019). For example, (but not exhaustive) some teams listed are not accounted. In 2018, twenty teams listed in the BSUK report noted as affiliated to the BBF were not registered, or we cannot account. Teams listed in the BSUK report in Northern Ireland are linked to Baseball Ireland and not the BBF. In 2018, we did not have 65 (rather less) youth teams registered in the BBF. In 2019, we did not have 61 (rather less) youth teams registered with the BBF. Considering we are a member in the company, and BSUK submits development numbers to Sport England to source public funding, we are concerned of the submission of inaccurate development numbers. We assume willful blindness is not a defense, so as a member in the company, it was resolved, we expect the errors pointed out to BSUK to be corrected promptly and republicised publicly.

As previously carried over, it was resolved, we continue to lobby BSUK not be grouping softball and baseball development numbers together as it gives misleading conclusions and we cannot assess their performance for baseball. For example, BSUK in 2018, claims to have developed 24,336 active players. The mentioned gives inflated numbers because it includes softball and does nothing to address whether the company is performing or underperforming for baseball. We will continue to lobby BSUK to separate active participants for baseball from softball. When BSUK provides prompt, defined, validated, segmented and accurate baseball numbers, we can monitor their performance, which promotes good governance. Further, we can set an accurate baseline of baseball participants and teams which are actively playing baseball. Thereafter we can make informed decisions and take any corrective actions.

3.5.3 Nominated Independent Board of Directors for BSUK. As previously resolved and carried over, we have no confidence in the BSUK nomination process of sourcing independent directors to the company by their CEO or board. Previously we found nominated independent directors vetted by the CEO of BSUK and others with material issues. For example, one nominee was under a material investigation by another NGB, and it was only until we brought it to the attention of BSUK did they become aware. Considering now there is a BDO report which may have material findings against BSUK senior management, it may question the nomination process further, or of those recruiting independent directors. Further, a rush to appointing members to the board of BSUK, when we are awaiting a copy of the BDO independent review of BSUK senior management, undermines taking careful or corrective measures to earn the confidence by both members of the nomination



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process. So, at this time, we will inform BSUK we do not feel comfortable with the nomination process or the appointment of independent directors to their board until we see the BDO report in full, so we can assess and make informed decisions.

- 3.5.4 BSUK request to re-appoint ex-independent director we have rejected.** It was resolved, we do not accept BSUK actions to re-appointment a former ex-independent director, who we rejected in Nov 2019 and was struck off the Companies Registrar. For example, we lost confidence in the mentioned directors' independence and treating us fairly. Moreover, until we see the BDO report, we don't even know if the above person, should be held accountable for any material findings during his tenure as acting Chairperson of the company. We will reinforce to BSUK we rejected the re-appointment of the individual in Nov 2019, and we continue to reject him further, to the company's board.

4 All other business. None.

There being no further business to transact at this time, it was voted to adjourn the meeting.